



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

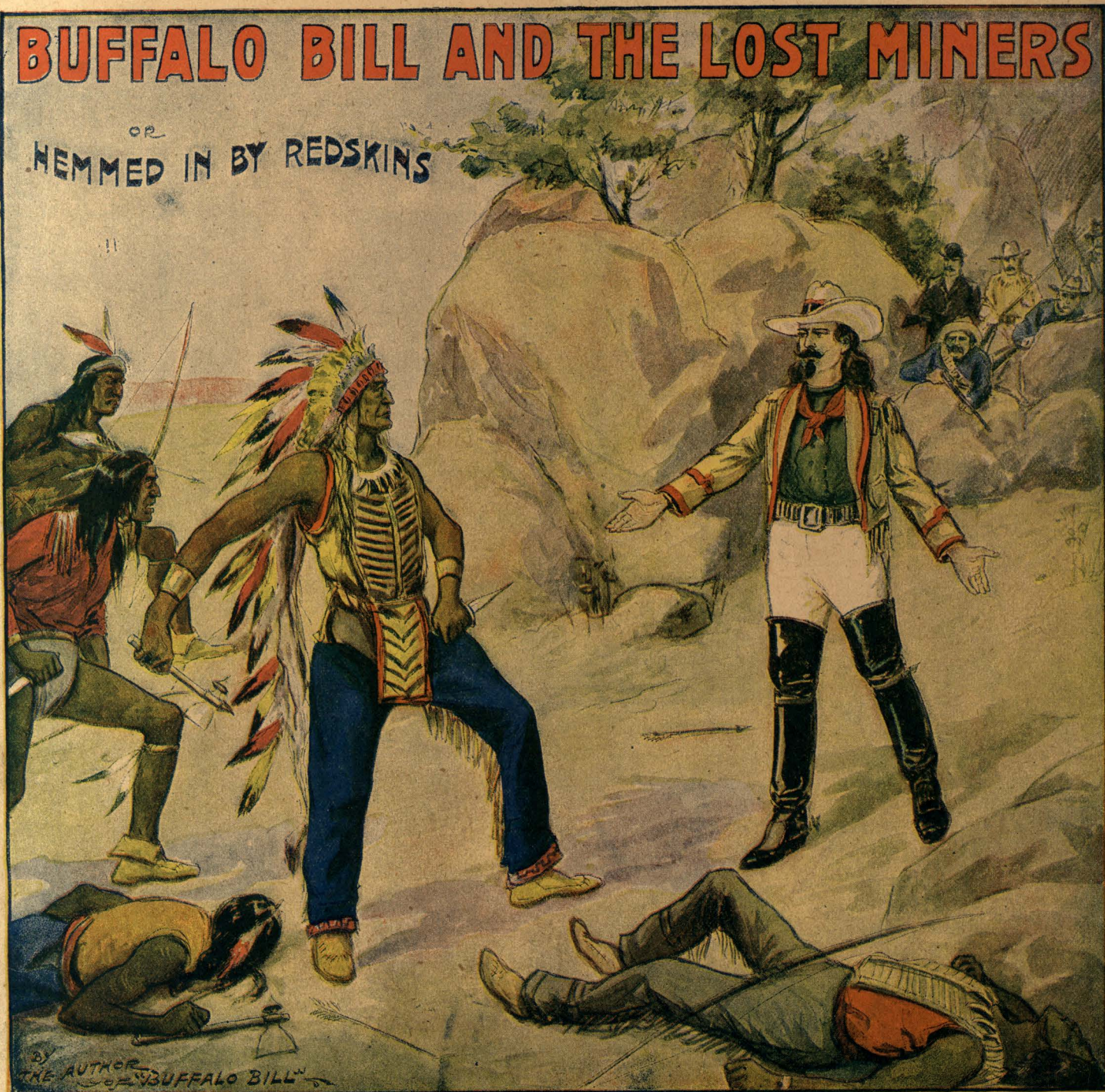
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No. 86.

Price, Five Cents.

BUFFALO BILL AND THE LOST MINERS

OR
HEMMED IN BY REDSKINS



BY THE AUTHOR
OF "BUFFALO BILL"

"GO BACK, CHIEF COYOTE, WITH YOUR BRAVE YOUNG MEN," SAID BUFFALO BILL, "FOR THE WARRIORS OF THE GREAT WHITE CHIEF ARE COMING HOT UPON YOUR TRAIL."



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BUFFALO BILL AND THE LOST MINERS;

OR,

Hemmed in by Redskins.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

CAPTIVES ON THE TRAIL.

It was a curious sight.

Early morning on one of the boundless plains of the far West.

Strung across the broad prairie was a line of fourteen horses. Ten of them were ridden by men bound hand and foot and tied fast to their saddles, their horses being joined together by a long lariat.

Three more horses carried burdens wrapped carefully up, but the experienced eye could easily detect that they were the bodies of dead men.

The last and fourteenth horse was ridden by a figure familiar to all our readers—Buffalo Bill, King of the Borderland, and chief of scouts at the remote frontier post known as Fort Faraway at the time of which we are dealing.

He was on his way back to the fort from an unusually successful scout.

The three dead men were outlaws the scout had shot—nine of the others were members of the same band, two of the nine being the leaders—Bob Brass the lieutenant and Jim King the captain. The tenth captive was a corporal who had deserted from the fort after killing a soldier there.

Buffalo Bill had come upon Bob Brass and his fol-

lowers as they were organizing themselves into a band known as the Mounted Miners of the Overland.

The mining they intended to do was in the pockets of passengers and in the mailbags and express boxes on the coaches of the Overland stage line.

Buffalo Bill induced them to surrender to him by bluffing them into the idea that he had a larger force with him.

When they laid down their arms he bound the eleven men—Bob Brass and ten others—and started for the fort. Then Dave Strong, the deserting corporal, attempted to rescue the outlaws, hoping to be made their captain, but instead he was made a prisoner by Buffalo Bill.

Another rescue had been attempted by Jim King, famous as an outlaw in the vicinity, and for whom Bob Brass had been recruiting the band when Buffalo Bill came upon them.

He had come upon the band of men he expected to be his followers and, seeing that they were prisoners in the hands of Buffalo Bill, had attempted a rescue.

In the skirmish that followed Buffalo Bill had shot three of the outlaws and had captured Jim King, the man who had expected to become their leader.

Then, with his cavalcade of prisoners, he lost no time in starting for the fort.

He had a good reason for his haste, and the prisoners noted that he often looked back anxiously as he hurried them along the trail.

His reason was that there were hostile Indians in the vicinity.

One of their scouts had struck the camp of Buffalo Bill the night before. Buffalo Bill had shot him, and it was on his pony that the body of one of the dead outlaws was borne.

There was a good deal of humanity in Buffalo Bill, and he did not like to leave the body of a man unburied in the wilderness.

The king of plainsmen feared that the Indians were on his trail and so did not wait to dig any graves.

He was right in his surmise as to the nearness of hostile redmen.

As the trail led over a ridge he turned again in his saddle and glanced back over the plain they had crossed.

He did not even start or change color, did not hasten his pace, or make a comment, but what he saw was enough to appall even his stout heart.

The glance backward had revealed several miles away fully a hundred Indians in full pursuit.

CHAPTER II.

REDSKINS IN PURSUIT.

Another eye than Buffalo Bill's had seen the pursuing Indians.

It was Jim King, the outlaw leader, and he, too, made no comment then, as he glanced backward.

He simply watched the scout ride quietly down the sloping, winding trail, lead the horses into a stream of water, pass the canteen around among the men for a refreshing draught, and then look to the girths and straps of each saddle, prisoner, and body.

This done he mounted and started on at a brisk trot. "May I ask if you saw that band of Indians pursuing us, Buffalo Bill?" he asked.

"Oh, yes!"

"There must be a hundred of them."

"At least that many."

"They saw us?"

"Beyond doubt."

"And are now in pursuit?"

"Of course."

"What are they?"

"They belong to the same tribe as the dead one here."

"You said nothing about seeing them to any one of us."

"Why should I, when I considered it the business of no one else than myself."

"You are a cool one, and I cannot help admiring you."

"Thanks."

"You came slowly down the trail so as not to distress the horses, watered them, looked to the girths and lariats, and now are off in flight."

"Certainly."

"With no hope whatever of escaping from those redskins, unless you do so alone?"

"I never desert my party, sir."

"You will have to this time, for those Indians come on at a pace that shows their ponies are fresh."

"So I observed."

"What will you do to escape them?"

"There is a rocky mound a few miles ahead, and I will stand them off there, for we could not find a better place

for men and horses, while there is a spring on the hill, some grass, wood, and a fine protection against a hot fire."

"But you are only one man."

"The Indians don't know that."

"Ah!"

"They will count about a dozen, think we are well supplied with provisions, as they will take the dead bodies for packs, and they will be very cautious about crowding us."

"But they may besiege us for days?"

"No, for the stage goes by to-morrow, and the Pony Riders' trail is in sight; no, we will be reported and get help from the fort."

"But you will let us help you fight them off?"

"Hardly, as I have no desire to fall into equally as cruel hands as though the Indians captured me!"

"Then you expect to stand them off alone?"

"Yes, for I have all of your rifles, revolvers, and—don't be frightened, for I will protect you from—your friends, I may say."

The men had heard this conversation with surprise.

They had listened with the very deepest attention.

Not one, save the stranger, had seen the pursuing Indians when Buffalo Bill had.

At once hope arose in their hearts for escape.

They, however, saw that Buffalo Bill was not to be nonplused.

He was not the man to surrender even to what appeared a certainty of release for his prisoners.

They heard his plan of action and knew that they could but submit.

What he had said about the coach passing and the Pony Express Riders, several of them knew was true.

Also, they knew that one man, and that man Buffalo Bill, handling a dozen rifles, several of them repeating weapons, and twice as many revolvers, could fool the redskins into a belief that the whole party of white men were fighting to stand them off.

That the scout would not trust them with weapons his words very quickly let them know.

"Well, Buffalo Bill, if you get safely out of this difficulty, and still hold us prisoners, I shall set you down as a most phenomenal man," said the leader King.

"As I will also," put in Bob Brass, while the corporal called out:

"So will I; but it cannot be done."

"This time, Chief Cody, you have got a larger contract on your hands than you can master."

Buffalo Bill's face did not change a muscle.

He still kept the horses at a gallop and appeared to be wholly unmoved by this new danger threatening.

At last the hill he had referred to came in sight.

It was a rock mound, several hundred feet in height, heavily timbered at the top, with bare slopes, and a couple of acres in size.

All about it was a plain, and no better position could be found to be defended by a party besieged.

With a dozen men to defend it, even a hundred Indians would be cautious about making an attack.

But there was only one man to fight, half a score to be worse than useless.

"There they come," and Buffalo Bill pointed to the Indians coming over the ridge, and then added:

"And there is our stronghold."

"What a man!" muttered King, as he looked into the face of the scout.

CHAPTER III.

BUFFALO BILL MAKES A THREAT.

The scout did not even quicken his pace at sight of the pursuing redskins, as they came sweeping over the ridge, all of them miles off yet.

He simply kept the horses up to the same gait and headed straight for the mound, so opportunely appearing before them, and now but half a mile away.

As they approached it the men saw that the base was almost a wall, only here and there with a break in it, and some of the party knew it by the name of The Tombstone, for it looked much like a massive monument ever green with weeds, the trees on the top appearing as the latter.

Buffalo Bill knew it well, for often before had he camped there, and several times had it been a place of refuge against Indians.

A small stream, the overflow of the spring, cut its way along the plain toward a larger one in the valley, and through this Buffalo Bill led the way up to the summit of the mound.

He halted his men upon the hilltop, just where they could not be seen by the Indians, and then tied the horses, so that they could not escape or stray.

His next move was to gather the weapons and place a rifle and revolver at different points, where he would have them when most needed.

This done, he made a circuit of the guns, and looked them over carefully, to see that all were in good working condition.

The Indians meanwhile were coming on at a run, those lagging behind hastening up to form a compact mass.

The outlaws watched him closely, and could but admire his game stand; but, there was an expression on the face of each man which the scout could but remark. It was a look of decided hope, and he had seen it come upon their countenances when he returned from the round of placing the weapons.

The men he had heard there talking in a low tone to each other, and a whisper had passed along the line that seemed to mean much to them.

It was the catching of only a word or two that placed the scout upon his guard, but that much was sufficient for him to read what was intended, as he had heard the words:

"You understand their language perfectly, and——"

That was all, but the words were addressed to Bob Brass and by King.

He did not appear to have heard anything, but as he stood ready to meet the charge, Buffalo Bill suddenly turned and faced his prisoners.

He glanced into the face of each man, and he saw now that all were radiant with hope of speedy release.

"Men, I have something to say to you," he said.

"And I wish to say to you, Buffalo Bill, that our blood will be upon your head, for you know that we are bound

hands and feet and cannot protect ourselves, while if you released us we would help you to defend ourselves and could no doubt beat the Indians off."

The speaker was Corporal Strong, the deserter, and Buffalo Bill smiled at his words, and replied:

"What I was going to say to you all was that you, Bob Brass, understand the language of these redskins, and several more of you may also do so, and if there is a call to them from any one of you as they come up, I shall turn and shoot that one dead in his saddle, bound as he is.

"Preservation is the first law of nature, and I have my life to care for, and you men to take as prisoners to the fort, and I shall do so if it is within my power.

"As you are not defending yourselves, you all know that the redskins are the allies of outlaws, and would not harm one of you, finding that your own people were against you.

"I have you to defend, and I shall do so to the best of my ability; but remember my threat, and I mean it, so help me Heaven, that I shall kill the man that utters a word when those redskins make their rush upon me.

"You are warned, so heed—they are coming!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE RUSH OF THE REDSKINS.

The threat of Buffalo Bill changed the face of every man from hope to blank despair.

The different rifles of the outlaws Buffalo Bill had placed on rocks from twenty to thirty feet apart, and his intention was to run from one to the other, carrying his own repeating rifle slung at his back for a last resort.

There were the revolvers, too, with each rifle, but these would only do for close work, should the redskins reach the hill.

Standing quietly in the central position he had chosen, Buffalo Bill waited the advance of the red horsemen, the rifle of Jim King, and it was also a repeater, in his hand.

As the body of redskins advanced nearer, still walking their ponies, still singing their war song, Buffalo Bill raised the rifle of King, and, taking good aim at one of the three chiefs in the band, pulled trigger.

It was a long distance, and yet the pony of the chief dropped in his tracks.

The Indians halted quickly, there were loud outcries, gesticulations, and then a sudden rush forward with demoniacal yells.

The scout met their start by emptying King's rifle into their midst, firing rapidly, but with aim, and not at random.

A couple of ponies and a brave were seen to fall, while another warrior clung to the neck of his horse, evidently badly wounded.

But on the Indians came. Springing the few paces to one side, the carbine of the corporal was seized and fired rapidly, and others of the redskin band felt the unerring aim of the scout.

Next came the rifle of Bob Brass, and in the same rapid but deadly way it rattled forth its leaden hail and with disastrous results.

But, on the Indians came, maddened by the attack that

they had met with losses, which they had not expected at that distance.

They had reached the foot of the hill, were crowding into the narrow trail in the wall of rock to ascend, when the shots fell thick and fast into their midst, for, just then, the scout had made a stand and opened with his own repeating rifle.

CHAPTER V.

ONE MAN AT BAY.

The Indians recoiled under the storm of that deadly repeating rifle, for they could not face it with the odds of the rugged, steep trail also against them.

The second chief fell, and there was a halt.

Some of the redskins took shelter among the rocks at the base of the hill, while others turned and stampeded.

Buffalo Bill had fought a grand battle, though it was from a fort, as it were.

He had brought down a dozen ponies, and how many braves had fallen no one knew.

They had sent a few shots up at the top of the hill, and a shower of arrows, but only one had been struck, and only slightly wounded, while, strange to say, the dead bodies of the three outlaws, as they were bound across their saddles, had each been hit by an arrow!

The brave scout did not rest upon his laurels. He had checked the Indians in their first mad rush, but well he knew they had come upon but one side of the hill—that there were several other trails upon different sides.

The braves would not attack again until night, so he made up his mind to act without delay.

First, he would reload his weapons, and the long range repeaters he would keep close at hand.

His intention was to take flight at once. Fortunately, the outlaws had all been kept mounted.

By throwing the dead bodies off of the horses that bore them, he would have these as extra animals, should any fail in the long, hard race which he must make.

The scout saw that he could ride down the further side of the hill, gain the plain unseen, and thus gain a mile the start of the reds in the race for life.

They had drawn out of range, but would hold a council of war, and that would mean a quick surrounding of the hill, a state of siege, and then a wait until night for further action.

The outlaws had watched the fight with a frenzy of suspense. Not even Bob Brass dared put the scout to the test by calling out the true situation to the redskins.

They saw him take the repeating rifles and fasten them to his saddle, and then untie the bodies from the horses to which they were securely bound; saw them laid in a row, the Indian with the three palefaces, and then beheld the scout tie the horses all together, as for a ride.

As he did so, his name was called, and into their midst bounded a white man!

CHAPTER VI.

THE PONY RIDER.

Every eye fell upon the man who came bounding into their presence.

He was small, smooth-faced, and youthful in appearance, while he was dressed in the garb of the Pony Ex-

press Riders of the Overland. In his belt he carried but one revolver to lighten his weight as much as possible.

"Pony Bob! By the gods of war!" cried Buffalo Bill, with some show of excitement, and he grasped the hand of the pony rider, one of his warmest friends.

"Yes, Bill, old pard, but what the mischief does this queer outfit mean?"

Buffalo Bill recounted his recent adventures in a few words.

"You are on your run east, are you not?" he asked of Pony Bob.

"I am."

"And——"

"Heard the firing, swooped around, found I could dash to the hill unseen, so did so, and my horse is at the base waiting for me, so I will report your fix at the fort and send help."

"I had decided to ride for it."

"Don't you do it, for there are other bands of redskins between here and the fort. I am late, from dodging, and I thought the reds had the coach corralled here, so I wanted to find out and report."

"The coach is not due, Bob, for——"

"The schedule has been changed since you left the fort, Bill, and the coach is about due here now."

"Too bad."

"I will turn it back if it has not already been caught, so you had best stay right where you are."

"You are right, and I will."

"There are soldiers out, I know, and I may come upon some, and will send them, for I do not wish night to catch you here."

"Nor do I."

"Right you are."

"But you can kill the gang and get away alone, you know."

The outlaws shuddered. They did not relish Pony Bob's way of getting rid of them, should the scout find he had to leave them to make his own escape.

Buffalo Bill knew that Pony Bob was joking, and smilingly responded:

"Oh, yes; I could get rid of them by killing them, Bob, for there are just two revolver loads; but I had rather not, in fact, if it can be done. I shall take them all into the fort, so report me and my position to the colonel, and tell him how much I need help."

"I'll do it."

"Now, Pony Bob, you had best get out while you can do so unseen."

"I'm off, and look for help as soon as I can get it here."

With this the Pony Express Rider bounded away down the further side of the hill, the way he had come, just as the redskin council of war broke up out on the plain.

They had decided what they would do.

The decision of the redskins had been anticipated by Buffalo Bill, who knew their methods thoroughly.

Brave as men can be, the Indian is yet cautious and cunning in all movements to better an enemy.

Those that had followed the scout and his prisoners to the mound had been repulsed in their first attack, and that called for a pow-wow.

It took time for braves so slow and dignified in council, and thus Pony Bob, the express rider, had had time to

visit the hill and learn the situation there with a fair show of soon getting help to the scout in his very terrible situation.

He had escaped by way of the ravine unseen, and was speeding away as rapidly as hoofs could carry him to seek help for Buffalo Bill.

Having decided just what they would do, and which the scout could have told them they would do an hour before, the redskins divided in two single-file columns.

These started to surround the hill, the columns dividing to join beyond the mound and thus completely invest it.

With great care to keep well out of range of the rifles, they moved on slowly, making signals to their comrades hiding under the rocky base of the hill, and when they met and made the circle complete they dismounted, staked out their ponies, and sat down with the patience displayed by Job to await their own time to move.

Buffalo Bill had quietly watched them, and knowing that it was long hours before night, and wishing to rest both horses and men, he decided to dismount his prisoners, get dinner for them, and let the animals get what cropping they could from the grass on the hilltop.

The men were accordingly dismounted one by one and made secure to a tree, save two of them, whose arms were freed, and they were set to work with knives and the scout's hatchet to dig a grave for their dead comrades.

The scout meanwhile built a fire, got out his provisions and cooking outfit, and began to prepare a meal for all hands.

The scout did not neglect, however, watching the redskins, to see that they made no sudden move, and he particularly kept his eyes upon the two outlaws digging the grave.

He well knew that with the knives and hatchet they could be dangerous if they cut the bonds off of their feet, and at least force him to kill them, for by a hard run of it they could bound down the hill and escape to the Indians.

The scout was not long in detecting that not only King, but Bob Brass and the corporal, were signaling to them to free themselves and make an attack on him, or a sudden bolt for liberty.

As his cooking kept him occupied he walked up to the two men, revolver in hand, and said in his decided way:

"If I see any move of you two men to cut your feet loose, I shall not give you warning, but drop you dead the moment I detect you in it.

"That is all I have to say."

He did not turn and walk away to the fire again, for none knew better than he how skillfully a knife could be thrown to kill, or a hatchet either.

Having gotten dinner ready he called the two men from their work on the grave to give their comrades their meals, freeing the hands of two men at a time, while he kept them covered with his revolvers.

It was a long and tedious task, but at last it was completed and then two others of the men were put to work upon the grave.

At last this, too, was finished, the bodies were wrapped in their blankets, and buried decently, after which rocks were piled upon the grave to keep the coyotes from digging them up.

This done, Buffalo Bill again bound the men securely

to trees, and then with his glass made a careful reconnaissance of the Indian lines.

Examining the line, he saw that the Indians were scattered, being a hundred feet apart at least.

As each side of the ravine by which Pony Bob had come and gone, the nearest redskin was fifty feet away.

To remain on the hill meant death, as it then appeared, while, by starting the moment it was dark, following the ravine, and pushing for the open plain, he could get upon the nearest redskins before they were discovered.

His rifle would quickly drop these, and then he would have a good start in the long race before the surprised Indians knew just what had happened.

"Yes, I will make the venture," he said, in his determined way.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCOUT DECIDES UPON A PLAN.

The outlaws could see that the scout had decided upon some move, and they grew more anxious, for they knew that his bold expedients were many.

"I shall leave here as soon as it is dark," said the scout. "Better not, for that means sure death to all of us," said Jim King.

"I see that I have hit upon the right thing to do by your not liking it."

The outlaws looked at each other in a way that showed their opinion was the same as the scout's.

Unheeding them, he began his preparations for his night flight.

Each saddle and bridle was looked to, and the lariats were looped so as to keep the horses a little over a length apart, while a short rein was to connect them two by two.

The leading horses were then to be attached by lariats to the horn of the scout's saddle, and thus arrayed he felt he could control the animals thoroughly and ride rapidly.

The horses nearest to him were to be those belonging to the dead outlaws, and these were to carry the weapons and the provisions and blankets, so as to make as equal a weight for all as was possible.

"That fellow is going to get through, Brass," said King, as he watched the scout at his work.

"But what is that he is doing now?"

At the query of King all watched the scout attentively.

He was cutting some small pieces of willow with his knife, trimming them in a peculiar shape, and tying thongs of buckskin around them, while pieces of dressed deerskin were put over one end.

"By heaven, but they are gags!" cried Bob Brass.

"Gags!" echoed the rest of the party in chorus.

"Yes.

"He will thrust that buckskin padded end into our mouths and tie them there with the thongs at the back of our necks."

"My God!" gasped the corporal.

"I say, don't let him do it," remarked Bob Brass.

"What can we do?"

"Resist."

"It is easier to talk than to act."

"I will not open my mouth," one of the men ventured.

"Nor me."

"I won't."

"You bet I don't swallow that."

The determination of the outlaws not to be gagged was shown by other remarks, until King said, dryly:

"A bowie knife will pry a mouth open very easily."

This was followed by silence, and all eyes watched Buffalo Bill as he went on making the gags.

"What are those?" called out Bob Brass as the scout finished his task.

"Gags."

"A threat to kill the man that calls out would be sufficient."

"Not at night, Brass. I could not tell who he was, and would not wish to make a mistake and kill the wrong man."

"That would be bad."

"Now, I shall begin work, for it will take me more than an hour to get you all ready, and night is not very far off."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TWO SENTINELS.

In every way in their power the outlaws tried to delay Buffalo Bill.

The scout went quietly on with his preparations for his flight, and soon began to mount the outlaws.

One by one he led up their horses, watered the animals, gave the men a drink from a canteen, and then came the fateful words:

"You must be gagged now."

The first man he approached was the one who had asserted that he would not be gagged.

He savagely refused to open his mouth, and quietly drawing his bowie knife Buffalo Bill said:

"Shall I pry your mouth open with this?"

"I warn you that it will not be gentle work."

The man held out until the point of the blade was forced between his teeth, and then he opened his mouth with a yell that the Indians heard.

Instantly the gag was driven into his mouth, and the thongs about his neck secured it there firmly.

The man was then aided to mount his horse and his hands were tied to the saddle horn.

Thus each one was brought up by the scout, gagged, mounted, and bound to his saddle.

The horses were then fastened two by two, the lariat lines tied from the leaders to the rear animals, on each side, and the rein across held them in place.

Turning his glance, the scout again swept his eyes around the Indian line, and let them rest for some time upon the ravine through which he had to pass to safety.

It was just dark as he hung the repeating rifles of King and Bob Brass to his saddle horn, his own at his back, and mounted.

He had decided upon a desperate deed, yet not more so than would be remaining where he was, for the Indians to rush in upon him under cover of the night.

Even then those redskins who had been forced to take refuge among the rocks at the base of the hill might be preparing to creep upon him.

Throwing some wood upon the fire, to brighten it up, Buffalo Bill mounted and set off on his perilous undertaking, his horses in lead.

Down the steep hill they went, gained the ravine and, passing along its bed, moved very slowly.

The bottom of the ravine was of sand and gave forth no sound of the hoof falls, the scout was glad to see.

He had once before left the mound by way of the ravine, when he went for a party of soldiers besieged there, but then had gone on foot.

Still, he knew well the way, and, could he pass the two redskins nearest the ravine, he felt that it then simply became a race for life, with the chances in favor of their horses against the Indian ponies.

On he went, through the ravine, until over half a mile had been gone over.

The ravine was broadening more and more, and he knew it would so continue until it reached the stream, where it was not deep enough to hide the horses from view.

Suddenly he halted. All saw why he had done so.

Boldly relieved against the starlit sky, standing on the edge of the ravine, was a human form.

An Indian sentinel was there guarding the ravine.

The scout at once dismounted, crept on ahead, leaving his own horse to hold the others in position, and, rifle in hand, he got to where he could see that another redskin was on the edge of the ravine bank on the other side.

"I must get them both, but can I?"

"It will take quick shooting, but I will do my best."

"They both must be brought down if I expect to pass out here."

So mused the scout, and he stood in the dark ravine, looking up at the two forms relieved by the sky.

He knew that they had been placed there since the darkness had come on.

As he brought his rifle up to his shoulder, suddenly, afar back upon the mound he had left was heard a chorus of wild yells.

They were from Indian lips, and expressed mingled surprise, rage, and disappointment.

The scout knew but too well his flight had been discovered.

Instantly, as the two sentinels turned at the cries, he took aim, and quickly came a flash and sharp report.

A second shot followed within a second.

CHAPTER IX.

FORCED TO ANOTHER REFUGE.

It was quick work, but Buffalo Bill was equal to it.

He brought one Indian down into the ravine dead, and the other fell wounded, and began his death song, after one loud cry of warning that the foe was upon him.

With a few rapid bounds the scout reached the horses, threw himself into his saddle, and at once dashed ahead in flight.

Down the ravine dashed the scout, and reaching the stream he plunged boldly in and the lariat horses were soon on the other side.

Once across the stream, Buffalo Bill kept on through the timber at a walk.

Feeling that he had certainly eluded his enemies, he decided to go to a mountain spur that overlooked the mound where he had taken refuge, and distant from it only a few miles.

If aid came to the mound he could attract attention from the spur by firing several shots and show where he was.

He did not dare, with the prisoners in lead as they were, attempt to strike for the fort then in the darkness, as he knew the Indians were scattered along his way, and he would be liable to run upon them at any time.

By going to the spur he would be in call of the mound, whither Pony Bob was to send aid.

There was no water there, no wood to cook food, but the canteens could be filled and the party would have to live on dry crackers until rescued.

After an hour's ride he reached the spur at the end of the range, and rode along until he came to the trail.

In years gone by the spur had evidently been the home of that strange race of Indians known as the "Cliff Dwellers," for ruins of their homes were still there.

Placing the horses now in single file, after watering them all at a spring at the base of the spur, he led the way up the trail, and at last reached the summit of the cliff.

There were boulders there to hide them from view, and a few scrub pines that might serve for fuel if necessary, but otherwise the cliff was bare.

The boulders concealed the horses and prisoners, and the scout knew that he could defend the cliff, so could ask no more, though he realized that both himself and his captives must suffer greatly if their rescuers were delayed in reaching them.

Still, nothing else could be done, and he made the best of it.

This trail was under command of his rifle for over a quarter of a mile of its ascent, and so narrow that not over a couple of Indians could come up abreast.

Arranging the horses among the boulders, he dismounted the prisoners, spread their blankets for them and tied them all together with lariats.

Then he took several blankets, mounted his horse, and rode back down the trail.

He knew the grass was long and rich in the valley, and he determined to cut sufficient to at least give the horses a mouthful now and then.

Every canteen was taken also to the spring and filled with the cool water that flowed from it, and when the scout returned to the cliff he felt that he could at least stand a siege of several days if driven to it.

Utterly worn out by his loss of rest and hardships of the last two days, he spread his blankets and went at once into a deep sleep, placing his own horse on guard on the trail, for he knew his faithful guard would warn him of danger, if he had been seen by the redskins to retreat to the cliff.

The rising sun, casting a ray into his face, awakened him, and he sprang to his feet with a start.

"Well, I have had at least half a dozen hours of sleep, and that, to me, means a great deal," he muttered as he looked about him.

"If I can only get these men to the fort, it will be the great act of my life," was the thought constantly in his mind.

His prisoners were just as he had left them the night before.

To all the scout gave a few swallows from the canteen after he had removed the gags.

"Say, Buffalo Bill, I wish to have a talk with you, apart from the others here," said King.

"All right; after you have all had your breakfast of bread and water, I will hear what you have to say," was the answer.

Half an hour after, King was led apart from the others, and, seated among the boulders, Buffalo Bill asked:

"Now, Mr. King, I'll hear what you have to say."

"I wish to say to you that it is in my power to pay you a large sum of money if you allow us to escape."

"Yes."

"Well, do as I ask you, and you shall have a clean ten thousand dollars, one thousand for each man."

"No, King, I am a poor man, but I believe I am honest, and am not for sale."

"I am sorry for you, but I cannot help you."

"You must take the consequences of your evil lives."

CHAPTER X.

THE CAMP.

Pony Bob was as true as steel to his old comrade Buffalo Bill.

As he sped along he saw a cloud of smoke ahead of him.

He was sure that it was the relay station on fire.

The Indians had attacked the stock herders, run off the horses kept there for the stages and pony express riders, and doubtless the two men had been killed or captured.

Pony Bob dare not go there, so must flank it and dash on to the next relay station.

It necessitated a further ride of twenty miles, and he had already pushed his horse desperately hard.

But no mercy was shown to horses in those days of the Pony Express.

Turning from the Overland trail, on he flew.

His good horse was kept at a full limit of speed, the spurs in his flanks keeping him up to it.

On, on he dashed.

Night had not yet come on, and he looked eagerly ahead to see if there was another cloud of smoke, telling of the burning of the next station.

If that also was deserted a hard time indeed would he have of it to continue on to the next with his tired horse.

At last he turned again into the Overland trail, and he could barely refrain from a shout as he discovered no fresh traces of Indians having gone that way.

The other station, he felt, was safe.

He arrived there with his horse staggering, and the animal dropped dead as he leaped from his back.

"Pards, the station behind is gone, burned up by redskins, and what the fate of the boys is I do not know."

"I flanked it and pushed for you; but, thank God, you are all right," he said, as the two stock tenders came out to meet him.

"Yes. Know'd those reds was a huntin' scalps, Bob, and so we turned the coach back to the fort with the news."

"How you got through there God only knows, and poor Buffalo Bill is right up among 'em somewhar and alone. for he passed several days ago a chasin' of Corporal Dave Strong, who had been doin' some killin' at the fort."

"Yes, I am now riding to send soldiers to help Buffalo Bill."

"I'll tell you about him as I eat my grub, and I want the very best horse in your outfit," answered Pony Bob.

Supper was served for him, and one of the men helped him to it, while the other went to get another horse than the one they had already, for Pony Bob's request was to secure an animal noted for his speed and endurance.

"We has the critters all in the corral, and ef ther Injuns comes, we'll give 'em a hard fight of it.

"But I guess they surprised the boys back at t'other station."

"I fear so," and then Pony Bob told of Buffalo Bill and his wonderful achievements, and the two men gave a cheer.

"Look out for yourselves," and Pony Bob threw himself into his saddle and was off like an arrow.

He had but one aim in view, and that was to get aid to Buffalo Bill as soon as possible.

Suddenly he beheld a light ahead; then another.

It was a camp-fire.

"Soldiers!" he shouted, as he caught sight of a camp and half a dozen men in uniform.

Turning from the trail he dashed up to the camp and called out:

"I am Pony Bob, the Express Rider.

"Who commands here?"

"Ho, Bob! Anything wrong?" and Lieutenant Walter Winter, a young cavalry officer, came forward.

"Yes, sir; all goes wrong, for Buffalo Bill is corraled at Monument Mound by a hundred Indians, and there are more about there, while the Brook Spur relay station has been burned, and I flanked it."

"Buffalo Bill corraled, and alone, Bob?"

"Worse than alone, sir, for he has ten prisoners with him."

"Ten prisoners?"

"Yes, lieutenant; nine outlaws of the Mounted Gold Miners' band, and Corporal Dave Strong."

"And he's at Monument Mound, or Tombstone, you say?"

"Yes, sir; corraled there, and he beat off one attack, for he's got an arsenal to fight 'em with."

"I am just now in search of Buffalo Bill, Pony Bob, for this gentleman here is on a hunt for a party of lost miners, as it were, the Gold Dust Jim outfit, and Colonel Duncan sent me out to find the chief of scouts and let him go on as guide for him," said Lieutenant Winter, referring to a gentleman who just then came up, and who was a tenderfoot on the plains, as a glance revealed.

The stranger spoke pleasantly to Pony Bob, and the latter saw in him a well-knit form, fine, daring face, calm manner, and decided that, after all, who ever the civilian said he was, he looked to be every inch a man.

"The colonel wished to find Cody, and if he had captured Corporal Strong, to bring the latter back to the fort, while he went on in search of the Gold Dust Jim outfit with Mr. Rupert Rockwell here, who is from the East, Bob."

"May I ask how many men you have, sir?"

"We are nine all told."

"Enough to give the Indians a scare, sir, and to cut through their line into the mound, while I suppose you wish to have me take word to Colonel Duncan."

"Yes, indeed, for if the Indians are in the numbers you

report, we will need a large force sent out, and lose no time about it, either."

"I will go on at once to Buffalo Bill's aid, and you can report to Colonel Duncan what I have done, and tell him all that you know as to the movements and doings of the Indians."

"I will sir."

"And, Bob, urge the importance of not a minute of delay, for the troopers cannot arrive too soon, and by the hardest riding they will not reach us before late to-morrow night."

"I am off, sir," and with a bound Pony Bob threw himself into his saddle again and was away at full speed.

Looking back as he got well away from the camp, he saw the troopers hastening to saddle up for the ride of rescue.

On like the wind rode Pony Bob, and after passing two more relay stations and getting fresh mounts he drew near the fort.

The stock tenders told him that the party under Lieutenant Winter must have taken the lower trail, not to have met the returning coach, and, as it had reached the fort, doubtless before that time, Colonel Duncan would have a force of cavalry even then on the way to meet the Indians.

As he drew near the fort, Pony Bob saw a dark mass ahead of him on the plain.

He drew quickly to a halt and heard the tread of half a hundred horses, along with the clanking of sabers and jingling of accoutrements.

"Good! A troop of cavalry is already on the march," he cried, and a moment after he drew rein and up came three scouts, followed by an officer and a troop of cavalry.

"Captain Sands, I have to make a report, sir," he cried, and quickly his story was told.

"Good for you, Pony Bob, and bravo for Buffalo Bill.

"Lieutenant Winter will rescue Cody and his prisoners doubtless, but get into a trap himself, so I will push ahead to the aid of all.

"But there are more Indians on the war trail than Colonel Duncan had any idea there were, from what you tell me, so ask him to please send after me a couple of light guns and two troops of cavalry, with what reserve force he deems best, for we had better be fully prepared, and it is well to have too many men, than not enough."

"I will tell him, sir," and with a salute Pony Bob was again off at a full run, while he saw that the cavalrymen at once had quickened their pace.

"They'll get there, and dear old Bill will come out O. K.," he said, as he sped along.

Half an hour more and he dashed into the fort and first rode to headquarters.

The colonel had retired for the night, but told the orderly to admit the pony rider, and he too heard the story of Buffalo Bill's brave capture of the outlaws and the corporal, and the danger the scout was then in.

Colonel Duncan sprang from his bed in a hurry, sent the orderly for his adjutant, and rapidly dressed as the pony rider talked.

"I will send force enough, for this is serious, and Cody must be rescued at all hazards," cried Colonel Duncan,

and then he complimented Pony Bob upon what he had done.

The adjutant now arrived, other officers were sent for, and just one hour after the arrival of Pony Bob the troopers were off to the rescue.

CHAPTER XI.

A RAY OF HOPE.

King, the outlaw, felt that he had played his last card for escape, when Buffalo Bill could not be tempted by the large price he had offered for the freedom of himself and companions.

While King was musing, Buffalo Bill stood near gazing through his glass down the valley and also sweeping the surroundings of the Tombstone Mound.

He had discovered that the Indians were encamped there, and in larger force than on the day before.

"I must rig some signal to let the soldiers know my whereabouts, should they come in sight," he thought.

He had taken from the Indian he had killed a new and brilliant red blanket, and one of the outlaws had a bright blue one, he had observed.

In a little while he had strung on a lariat his red and blue blankets, and a white cloth, and found two scrub pines he could tie them between at a height of some dozen feet from the ground.

One end was made fast, and the other passed over a limb of the tree, ready to draw the line taut and display the signal.

Up he pulled the signal, and almost immediately he saw that it was discovered by the redskins about Tombstone Mound.

There was much excitement visible among them, riding to and fro, and in a short while a mounted force of a hundred braves moved at a gallop toward the cliff.

"Now we have another chance," said Bob Brass.

"Yes, they must take this cliff now or we will never escape," the corporal said.

"This position is more easily defended than was the Monument Hill yonder, and that man will beat them back," remarked King.

"We might hail them, for he has forgotten to gag us," said Bob Brass.

"Yes, if they knew we were prisoners, that they did not have to fight us, but one man, and that man Buffalo Bill, for whose scalp they would sacrifice a hundred warriors, then I believe they would take the cliff at all hazards," said King.

"I will call out to them in their own tongue as soon as they get near enough," responded Bob Brass.

"Good! See, Buffalo Bill is taking his position to command the trail, and looking to his weapons."

"And has forgotten to gag us," added the corporal, with great glee at the thought, while a cheerful look of hope stole over each outlaw's face.

The hope of the outlaws was short-lived.

A couple of large rocks, which the outlaws thought beyond his power to move, he with apparently no great exertion rolled to the edge of the cliff where the trail came up.

Smaller ones were added to these, and the scout had a good breastwork built, with not much trouble.

Then he walked over toward the outlaws, the Indians being but a quarter of a mile away, and coming in a walk.

"Men, get up," he said.

"We can't walk."

The men were in an ugly mood, and Buffalo Bill realized it.

He calmly drew a revolver in each hand and said very quietly:

"You know that I make no idle threats."

"Now, I tell you again that the man that utters a cry to those Indians I shall kill."

"If I do not know which one did so I shall turn and fire half a dozen shots upon your gang, and fire to kill, too."

"You know the alternative, so act as you deem best."

"Now, I have told you to rise, and you refuse."

"I have my revolvers in hand, and mark my words, the man that remains seated, after I give the order to rise, gets a bullet through his right ear, as my special brand."

The Indians were drawing dangerously near, yet Buffalo Bill seemed not to heed the fact.

"Attention, men!"

"One! two! three! rise!"

As one man the outlaws scrambled to their feet, as best they could, bound hands and feet.

Buffalo Bill then turned toward the Indians, and gave his wild warcry, which was so dreaded and well known among the tribes of the Northwest.

The Indians halted for a moment, looked searchingly upward, and returned an answering cry of defiance.

But they saw the scout and the outlaws.

It was to show his pretended force that Buffalo Bill had made them rise.

He had driven the prisoners to obey him, thus gaining his point.

The men saw that the man held the power to do as he threatened, and from King to the meanest wretch of the gang they were subdued thoroughly.

Leaving them, the scout walked to his barrier, and picked up his own trusty rifle.

The chief of the band he noted through his glass, was a young man, large, and bedecked in a most gorgeous costume.

He was mounted upon a fine American horse, as white as snow.

Taking deliberate aim at the head of the white animal, Buffalo Bill pulled the trigger.

It was a long range shot, a shot of warning, and it was an unerring one.

The white horse dropped dead beneath his gorgeously bedecked rider.

CHAPTER XII.

A GALLANT BAND.

The deadly aim of Buffalo Bill brought the band of Indians to a sudden halt.

The white horse was dead, and the young chief was pinioned beneath his weight, so suddenly had he fallen.

Warriors quickly dismounted and drew him from beneath the dead horse, while one brave led forward an extra animal and the saddle and bridle or the chief was put on him.

The chief was slightly hurt only, and mounted quickly. They turned to ride back out of range of that terrible rifle.

What they then decided upon they would do, or at least attempt.

But as they turned they saw the tall form of their dreaded foe appear upon the very edge of the cliff.

They all knew Buffalo Bill by sight.

There was no mistaking that magnificent form.

But what was he doing?

Actually waving his sombrero round and round his head.

They halted for a moment in their backward march, and then they saw him put his field glasses to his face.

"Far-look eyes," they called the field glasses.

The scout had them to his eyes and was looking down the valley.

What he saw the redskins also saw.

Buffalo Bill's "far-look" eyes were turned upon a party of soldiers just entering the lower end of the valley.

They were four miles away at least.

The band of Indians had some three miles to reach the Tombstone Mound, where the remainder of their force was.

They lost no time in starting to join them.

In fact, they went off as one man, and in a sweeping run, while they uttered cries of wild disappointment and rage.

Of course they supposed that the soldiers were the advance guard of a large force.

Buffalo Bill had the same idea, and called out to his prisoners, with excusable exultation:

"The troopers are entering the valley."

The prisoners groaned in agony of spirit.

Buffalo Bill kept his eyes fixed upon the soldiers.

His face was a study, for he had made some discovery.

What he saw seemed to puzzle him.

"That is the boldest advance guard I ever saw in the face of a foe so numerous," he muttered.

"There must be a large force waiting in the timber at the end of the valley, though my glass does not show any.

"Why, there is only a couple of scouts, an officer, a man in civilian attire, and half a dozen soldiers, with several pack horses.

"Their horses are jaded, too, but they are putting the spurs to them hard—ah! the Indians have halted, seeing that they have no support, and the band is coming back to cut them off.

"Now, ride for it, men, ride for your lives!" shouted Buffalo Bill.

But his voice could not reach half the distance to the gallant little band.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RIDE FOR THE CLIFF.

Each man in the party of rescuers saw his danger, and noted well the distance they had to ride to the cliff, and the distance the Indians had to come to head them off.

"It is chances even for us," said Winston, the commander.

And on the party flew, the pack horses being well driven up with the others.

But the Indians were now urging their horses at full speed.

If the advance guard reached the cliff trail, the Indians knew that they were safe, for they supposed that the men on the cliff would open a deadly fire to support their climb up the trail.

It thus became a question of life and death for the little party.

Lieutenant Winston and all with him realized this fact.

"Don't falter, men!

"Keep your horses well in hand and drive your spurs deep," came in the cool voice of the gallant young officer.

"There stands Buffalo Bill, rifle in hand, and he will support us," he said a moment after, and added:

"Now, Mr. Rockwell, you will be able to see the greatest of bordermen in action, and it will be a revelation to you."

"I shall be glad to see him, for I am strangely drawn toward the man, from all you say of him," replied Rupert Rockwell.

So on the little party flew, and on the Indians came.

To the coolly calculating eyes of the young officer it seemed that as he reached the base of the cliff the Indians would be upon them.

To prevent this he decided to strike a blow that would be felt by the redskins.

"Men, we will have to fight for it.

"Get your carbines ready, soldiers."

Lieutenant Winston spoke calmly, yet decidedly.

He had determined to push the pack horses ahead with Mr. Rockwell, have the two scouts guard them, while he halted and delivered a fire in the face of the coming Indians with his half dozen cavalymen.

But just here arose a question, for Rupert Rockwell, armed with a splendid repeating rifle, and a man who had shown to all that he knew no such word as fear, replied to the lieutenant's order to go to the front with the pack animals and scouts:

"I am not one to be protected, Lieutenant Winston, at the risk of others.

"I will fire with your men, sir."

They were yet half a mile from the cliff, and the Indians were an equal distance.

Then all saw Buffalo Bill take off his broad sombrero, and wave it around his head, as a means of encouragement to the little band of flyers.

They answered with a cheer as they ran, and instantly followed the scout's wild warcry.

This the coming redskins replied to with mad yells, as they urged their ponies on.

Back about Tombstone Mound were now seen several hundred mounted braves, ranged in line of battle.

They were showing their force, having come down from the Mound.

Another moment, and when within a quarter of a mile of the cliff, the lieutenant shouted:

"Attention!

"Wheel into line and halt!

"Ready, aim, fire!"

Ten rifles flashed together, the men having obeyed the order well, and wheeled to the right into line. Lieutenant Winston also carrying a repeating rifle slung to his saddle, for he was fond of hunting.

The ten bullets met the charging Indians full in the face, and ponies and braves went down.

Momentarily the redskins were checked, just long enough for their foes to get again on the run, the soldiers reloading their carbines as they sped along.

As they neared the cliff a loud voice rang out, as though coming from the clouds:

"The trail leads up between those two large rocks.

"Fire as you reach them, and then climb on foot, leading your horses.

"I will do what I can to beat them back!"

"Ay, ay, Cody.

"Three cheers for Buffalo Bill!" shouted the lieutenant.

The cheer was given with a will, as the party dashed on, and all knew that a few moments more would tell the story.

They were within a couple of hundred yards of the cliff, the redskins about one-half more that distance away, and, ten to one against them, matters certainly looked dubious as to their escape.

The Indians, mad at the losses they had suffered, yet flushed with hope of revenge, were yelling like demons.

They believed that their triumph was assured.

Upon the cliff, looking like a statue, so still did he stand, leaning upon his rifle, was Buffalo Bill.

His eyes were taking in the whole situation.

He was taking in the situation just as it was, and like a skillful general he knew just when to act.

He had already brought the weapons of the outlaws to where he could grasp them quickly.

Another minute and the order came:

"Halt here!"

"Fire!"

They had reached the rocks, and halted together.

All ten of the men fired almost as one.

The leaden hail did good work, for the Indians were not a hundred yards away now, and coming with a rush.

But the volley did not check other than the braves and ponies that went down under it.

"Why does not Buffalo Bill fire?" came in a gasp from Walter Winston's lips.

No one could answer him.

The horses were rushed between the two rocks for the steep trail.

The pack animals went first, led by Scout Ball.

But the Indians were firing now, and three of the riding horses fell dead.

Then Scout Sands threw his hands over his head and fell his length.

Rupert Rockwell seized his body in his arms and bore him up the trail.

One soldier, then another, went down, and Lieutenant Winston received a wound in the arm.

Another soldier got an arrow in the shoulder.

Matters looked desperate now.

All felt it, all knew it.

"Why does not Buffalo Bill fire?" again cried Rockwell.

"Why does not Buffalo Bill fire?" was once more asked.

The answer came at once.

The scout bounded before them, his arms filled with firearms.

He had come down the trail from the cliff.

He had come to share the danger personally of those who had boldly risked their lives to rescue him.

He was in their midst now, and had halted behind a boulder, breast high, that covered the trail.

He had with him his own and the repeating rifles of Corporal Strong, King, and Bob Brass.

Then, too, he had other rifles, those of the outlaws, and was weighted down with revolvers.

"Men, take these arms, and two of you reload your weapons!" he shouted.

They gave him a cheer. Hope was renewed, and into the very faces of the Indians was flashed the leaden bullets, doing work most deadly.

The ponies went down, braves fell in numbers, and the force of Indians were hurled back like a giant wave striking against a rocky shore.

They could not reach their foes, their comrades were dropping from their ponies, and death was playing sad havoc upon all sides.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RESCUERS RESCUED.

The fight at the foot of the cliff trail was a desperate one.

With a score of dead, and as many dying, while nearly half of their ponies had fallen, and their chief among the slain, the Indians, who had come on as recklessly as demons, turned at last in desperation and stampeded.

It was a mad run for life with them now.

But not a shot followed them.

Buffalo Bill's command had been when they turned:

"Don't add to the slaughter, pards!"

"Don't fire on flying men!"

"You are right, Cody.

"But God bless you, old fellow, for the work you have done, for you saved us," and Lieutenant Walter Winston wrung the scout's hand with both his own.

The others, too, came forward, and the officer said:

"Cody, I wish to present you to Mr. Rupert Rockwell, a gentleman from the East, who has come out here on an important mission, and Colonel Hughlets sent me with him as an escort to find you, for he wishes you to go with him and aid him in carrying out his plans.

"Mr. Rockwell you need no longer regard as a tender-foot, after what he has done to-day, for he is as good a pard as any one would wish in danger."

The scout and Rupert seemed to take to each other at once, and after seeing that the Indians were not to be supported in another attack by their comrades about the Tombstone Mound, the party began to look to their losses.

Sands, the scout, and two of the soldiers were dead.

The lieutenant and two more of his men had received slight wounds, while three of their horses had been killed.

"We will leave the dead here, sir, and can look after your wounds when we get upon the cliff, where I have some prisoners to look after," said Buffalo Bill.

"Yes, Pony Bob told me of your splendid achievement, Cody; but we'll talk that over later.

"But, can we do nothing for the redskin wounded?"

"A little, sir, perhaps, after we have seen to our own safety, for I noticed scouts dash away down the valley yonder, and they have gone to see if there are other sol-

diers coming, and how far off they are, so they can attack us with their whole force if they have the time."

"Ah, that will be bad."

"Only so far as our having nothing on the cliff for our horses to eat, and I am out of provisions, sir."

"Pard, I have plenty of provisions along; but the horses will have to suffer, I fear."

"We can cut them some grass to keep them from starving, sir; but first we will get all safe aloft."

This was done, for the pack horses and other animals were led up the steep trail, one of them carrying a soldier who had been wounded in the leg and could not walk.

The dead were laid side by side behind a boulder, and then the party went up to the summit of the cliff.

The prisoners already knew the result of the battle beneath them.

They knew that all hope had fled for them.

With scowling faces they watched the scout and his rescuers come up on the cliff, and they remained silent when Lieutenant Winston spoke to them.

To the corporal he said nothing, and the fugitive murderer remained silent and sullen.

The wounds of the lieutenant and soldiers were dressed by Rupert Rockwell, who had received his degree of M. D., yet never had practiced medicine, though why he did not state.

Taking the canteens, and a couple of the soldiers and Scout Ball with him, Buffalo Bill descended the cliff to the spring and filled them.

They were all given water around, and holding up the heads of the horses, a canteen was emptied into the mouth of each one.

Several trips were thus made, some grass was cut for the horses, and a little wood gathered for the building of a fire to cook a good meal.

Under the guard of the three soldiers, the prisoners were relieved of their bonds for one hour, to give them relief and allow them to eat their supper.

As they all finished their meal, Buffalo Bill called out: "The Indians are coming to attack us in force."

They were coming in full force from beyond the Tombstone Mound, and a dread body they appeared.

They rode in one vast mass, and they sang a war song as they came, their horses at a walk.

The band that had been beaten back from the cliff was in the rear.

Their wild, weird song was heard by those on the cliff, and yet no one held dread of the result.

Buffalo Bill had said that a dozen men could hold that trail against a thousand.

And they believed him.

They were not a dozen men, only seven to fight, all told, and the Indians were not a thousand.

But they had the cliff, they had had a good meal, and they were ready for the fight.

They had, too, the weapons of the outlaws, and those of the soldiers and scout who had fallen.

Then, too, Buffalo Bill had gathered several muskets from the fallen Indians, and nearly two score bows and many arrows.

These would come in well in such a battle.

"Have no fear, for we can beat them back, mark my words," Buffalo Bill had said.

All the defenders, few as they were, felt confidence. They had climbed the steep, zigzag trail.

They had made a breastwork of rock across the edge of the cliff, wide enough to protect all, and it commanded the trail from base to summit.

They were ready for them. All the weapons were loaded, the bows and arrows placed at hand, and small rocks gathered up and piled along the front edge of the cliff.

There were four of the prisoners to be freed to use them.

The chief of scouts had proposed that they should.

Not to be trusted with weapons they would have their legs still bound, with space between to move about, their arms free, and they were ordered to throw rocks upon the Indian mass below.

This would be a new kind of warfare, and very demoralizing, Buffalo Bill thought, to the redskins.

Corporal Dave Strong had asked to be one of the four men.

The scout had sternly refused, as had also Lieutenant Winston, to whose company he had belonged.

Bob Brass had also been a volunteer.

So had King.

But Buffalo Bill had also refused.

He selected the four men who had given him the least trouble.

"Do your duty, men, and it will act in your favor at your trial.

"Think what you are ordered to do, and I'll assure you that you will not suffer the more.

"I shall keep my eye upon you, and the man I see playing off, and not throwing those rocks as they should be thrown, and can be thrown to kill, I shall remind him that I am watching him by clipping him with a bullet."

"We'll do right, you bet," said one.

"You bet we does," another added; "we do jist right."

"It will be the first time you ever did, so it will be well to make the exception, if you don't wish a finger or an ear clipped off."

The four men looked downcast at this threat, and one voiced the sentiment of all when he said:

"I guess it's easier ter throw stones at Injuns, than to nurse a gone finger or ear."

"And it may be more than a lost finger or ear, for I am not just sure my aim will hold good, after the trouble you have all given me," significantly returned the chief of scouts, and the four men understood his meaning but too well.

In the meanwhile, the mounted army of redskins was nearing the cliff.

CHAPTER XV.

AWAITING THE STORM OF DEATH.

It was a brave sight, indeed, to see that little band of seven men, three of them with wounds, standing at the rock breastwork at the head of the trail, and waiting to face a force of nearly a hundred to one against them.

Seated on the cliff, a hundred feet from the breastwork, were their forced allies, the four outlaws, who had their arms freed for the work they had to do.

Their legs were bound with a walking space, so that they could move about readily, yet not run off along the cliff, though escape in that direction was impossible.

The steep trail was the only way of reaching or leaving the old home of the Cliff Dwellers, unless they sprang off from the dizzy height of several hundred feet.

By each outlaw was a pile of rocks, ranging in weight from three pounds to twenty, and which would be sure death to the brave or pony whose head it dropped upon.

About the base of the cliff there would be hundreds of Indians, while as many more would be crowding up the steep trail.

With each pile of stones, numbering several hundred, they would prove a most able ally in the battle of the cliff, if the four outlaws threw them as they were ordered to do.

If they did not obey Buffalo Bill's orders they knew just what to expect.

The rest of the gang of outlaws envied these four, for they were free.

They had been tied securely again, and could but wish that it had not been so.

They were sullen now, and almost hopeless of rescue.

So often had Buffalo Bill foiled all attempts at escape, all efforts at rescue, they began to feel that he was not to be downed by any danger, obstacle, or numbers.

"That man Cody is not to be whipped," said King, consolately.

"A stray bullet may yet do the work for him," added the more hopeful Bob Brass.

"The lead is not mined yet for the bullet that will kill him," Corporal Strong said.

"Well, I wish it were all over one way or another, for suspense is worse than hanging," King rejoined.

"Can't we get a sign to those four lucky devils yonder to play off and not hurt an Indian?" asked Bob Brass.

"Don't you know they dare not with Buffalo Bill's eye upon them?" was King's remark.

"That is so, captain."

"And more, they will work to please Cody, for they will hope to have it help them on hanging day," the corporal said.

So they talked on, while the advancing redskins got so close to the cliff, though yet some distance off, that they could no longer see them.

They still heard the rumble of the ponies' hoofs, mingling with their shrill, discordant war song, as they continued to still advance.

"They look dangerous, Mr. Cody," said Rupert Rockwell.

"Yes, and we would find them terribly so, sir, if we were not up here, for no better position could be had for us."

"Right you are, Cody, and your wonderful knowledge of this country enabled you to pick your fighting places," the lieutenant remarked.

"The Tombstone is the best place, sir, if we had a larger force to defend it, as there is water, wood and grass there.

"Here we could not stand a very long siege without

giving up, but fortunately help will soon be here, and I only hope it will be force enough.

"I wish now that I had ridden out while I could to meet the command and send back for more soldiers."

"You would have had to take desperate chances to escape from the valley, Cody, and dodge the scouts sent by the Indians."

"Yes, lieutenant, but I think I could have made it, and I feel certain that the Indians we see are not all there are to come, for that is the old head chief they call Colonel Coyote, and when he leaves his village he always has a thousand braves or more within close call of him."

"I hope, indeed, that Colonel Duncan has sent a large force, and he would quickly do so if he knew or suspected that it was the old chief, Colonel Coyote, out on the war-path, for we all know what that ancient red devil is capable of, Cody."

"He loves to fight palefaces better than anything else on earth," was the reply of Buffalo Bill.

In the time that this conversation was going on the Indians had advanced to within range of the repeating rifles of the palefaces.

But there was no desire to show what they could do.

They could wait until no shot would be thrown away upon the crowded mass of red riders.

The wounded redskins had crawled near to the cliff to get out of the way of the coming braves.

They had felt the power of the whites, and they knew that a desperate battle must be fought to subdue them, that the number of dead and wounded would be largely added to.

But they had hope in their comrades—they would win.

CHAPTER XVI.

A DEATH STRUGGLE.

The Indians rode boldly forward, their wild war song reaching the ears of the few on the cliff to oppose them, yet blanching no cheek, causing no tremor of fear.

Those were brave men there to face the odds against them.

Even Rupert Rockwell seemed not in the least disturbed, though such scenes were doubtless new to him.

Buffalo Bill was quiet and watchful, yet not in the least disturbed, if his face was a criterion of his feelings.

Expecting the palefaces to open at long range, the redskins held their reins in hand and were ready for a grand dash the moment a shot was fired.

But no shot came.

Lieutenant Winston had said:

"This is your play, Cody, for I am only an aider and abettor in this fight.

"Run it to suit yourself and call upon me to do what I can to help you, and you know that means those with me.

"You have done much phenomenal work thus far. I wish you to keep it up."

"Thank you, lieutenant, and I know well what I may expect in your aid.

"I shall not fire on the Indians until they attempt to come up the trail."

"I believe it is best, and then do quick and deadly work, for that will tell.

"Help from the fort should be here by sunset at least."

"I only hope help sufficient will come, sir."

"See, those reds are puzzled because we do not fire upon them."

"They are as uneasy as cats in a strange garret, I can see."

The Indians were singing their war song, but every eye was upon the cliff.

All seemed to be waiting for a surprise.

They were now almost under the shadow of the cliff, and suddenly, as though to break the suspense of the palefaces, they uttered one wild yell and dashed up close to the spur.

Still there came no shot from the cliff.

The redskins were certainly uneasy.

The old chief shouted an order, and his braves dashed between the rocks to ascend the trail on horseback.

"They don't like climbing," said the scout dryly, and he continued:

"I'll let the outlaws open the fight."

"Ho, there, stone throwers, start in on your work, for if you can stampede the gang it will save many lives."

The four outlaws set to work with a will.

Four large stones went flying over the cliff, followed by others in quick succession.

There was a whirring sound above the Indian's heads, and right into the crowded mass of humanity the deadly missiles began to fall.

The shock was terrible, and for a moment it seemed as though this novel mode of warfare would stampede the band.

Warriors fell from their ponies with crushed skulls.

Ponies went down with broken heads.

All were momentarily thrown into a panic.

But the thunder tones of the old chief, Colonel Coyote, rallied his braves, and they moved out of range of the stones, then made a rush for the steep trail.

Then Buffalo Bill shouted:

"Now let them have the lead!"

There was a volley of firearms, followed by the crackling of the repeating rifles rattling forth their deadly discharge.

The braves went down by the half dozen, and ponies were piled high at the foot of the trail.

The whole band recoiled before the terrible fire, and this gave the palefaces a chance to reload their weapons.

But the old chief's deep tones rallied his warriors, and they rushed to the trail once more, now on foot, as they were ordered to do.

The trail was black with them as they bounded up the steep way.

But again the rifles rang out, and once more the head of the Indian column melted away.

A third time they came up the trail after their recoil, this time led by old Colonel Coyote, who seemed to possess a charmed life.

Again the rifles opened, and now the Indians had gotten further than before up the trail.

But again they melted away.

There in the midst of his dead stood old Colonel Coyote, shouting to his braves to come on.

"Don't kill that brave old chief," shouted Buffalo Bill, his admiration being great for the brave Indian leader.

"This is slaughter—why will they come on?" he said a moment later.

The Indians who could not get to the trail were firing with their rifles, and the air was filled with clouds of arrows.

But few reached the top of the cliff, falling short.

The outlaws were hurling stones down upon the Indians, and suddenly Buffalo Bill shouted:

"Stop that! it is barbarous work, and we can keep them off without it."

A moment after he cried:

"This is terrible!"

"Yes, Cody, can it not be stopped?" asked Lieutenant Winston.

"I will try."

With this he sprang over the rocky barrier down the trail, and advancing with hands upraised, the palms turned toward the redskins, he called out in their own language:

"Go back! the Great Spirit is angry with his red children."

"He will not let them destroy their paleface brothers."

"Go back, Chief Coyote, with your brave young men, for the warriors of the great white chief are coming hot upon your trail!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DYING AVENGERS.

The act of Buffalo Bill in suddenly appearing before the Indians, and walking boldly down the trail, while he called out to them, was a complete surprise.

Every voice was hushed instantly.

Every Indian ceased firing.

A silence of death followed, and every eye was upon the bold scout.

He spoke their language well, his voice was loud, clear, and resonant, and each word he uttered they heard.

They seemed to feel that it was no trick, for the dead about them showed how they were suffering, and yet they had not gotten halfway up the trail.

The Indians appeared to take the scout's humane act just as it was intended, at least Chief Coyote did.

He, too, raised his hands. He was at the head of his warriors in the forlorn hope, and yet was untouched by a bullet.

On foot, too, he had been climbing the steep trail, his braves falling about him in numbers.

"The great white chief, Pa-e-has-ka (Buffalo Bill's Indian name) has spoken well."

"I will go with my dead and my dying young men, for the Great Spirit protects Pa-e-has-ka."

But as he spoke, Buffalo Bill glanced down the valley, and far off he saw a moving mass of horsemen.

He pointed instantly toward the coming horsemen and cried:

"My eyes see the white braves coming to strike at Chief Coyote, for leading his young men upon the warpath."

"Others will follow—see!"

But the redskins had already seen the soldiers in the distance, as the scout first pointed them out.

Their scouts sent in that direction had not returned to give an alarm, so they had not looked for trouble from the soldiers.

The old chief knew now that he had to fight, and to do so successfully he must seek the Tombstone Mound.

Instantly he thundered forth his orders to his braves, and there was mounting in hot haste by all save those he ordered to carry off their wounded and dead comrades.

But this was no easy task, and the Indians found that if they could carry the wounded with them they would accomplish much.

But the soldiers had already discovered them, and were forming in line of battle to thus advance.

They looked in large force to the redskins, but seen from the cliff, Buffalo Bill knew just how many there were, and said:

"There is but one troop.

"If more are not following, Lieutenant Winston, it will be a wipe-out for them.

"I will go and meet them, sir, so messengers can be sent back for reinforcements, and that troop must make a bold bluff to get here for protection, as Colonel Coyote is rapidly getting more warriors, you see," and Buffalo Bill pointed to where other bands were coming down the valley.

The scout's horse was quickly saddled and bridled, and Lieutenant Winston said:

"Let me go, Cody, for you cannot be spared here."

"No, sir, I will go, for it may be that I shall have to ride on to the fort, as I know the short cuts."

Calling to his horse to follow him, Buffalo Bill started down the steep trail on foot.

He knew if discovered the Indians would divine his motive and try to head him off.

He was not long in being discovered, and fully a hundred warriors were thrown forward to intercept him.

But he continued on down the trail, reached the dead braves that blocked it, and rode over them, and further down had to leap across the slain ponies.

Here and there he saw amid the slain braves a wounded one who had not been carried off by his comrades in their hasty flight, and he had just time to cry out in the Indian tongue:

"If you let that arrow fly I will kill you!"

The Indian warrior had fitted an arrow to his bow to kill the scout.

He was badly wounded in the body, but he was game to the last, and had half risen on one arm to kill his foe.

But the threat did no good, had no effect on the dying avenger, and the arrow was fired.

It struck the knife hilt of the scout, glanced, and did no harm.

But for that knife in his belt the arrow would have pierced the body below the heart.

With a bound the scout was upon the dying redskin before he could fit another arrow to the bow, for he would not carry out his threat to kill him.

Tearing the bow from his hands he cast it beyond his reach just as a shot came from the cliff, and an arrow fell almost at the feet of the scout.

Buffalo Bill saw there another wounded Indian, fifty feet away, fall forward from a kneeling position upon his face and then roll over.

In his hands he grasped a bow.

The shot had been fired from the cliff that killed him,

and it had saved the scout's life, for the bullet had struck the redskin just as he was about to let the arrow go, hence its force had been destroyed.

Buffalo Bill glanced upward and beheld Rupert Rockwell.

He had seen the wounded Indian's intention and to him the scout owed his life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SCOUT'S RUN.

Buffalo Bill waved his hat to Rupert Rockwell for his act, and Lieutenant Winston and the others gave three cheers for the man from the East who had followed the scout part of the way down the trail.

It was slow work making his way down the dead-strewn trail with his horse, for the Indians were riding hard to intercept him.

But he reached the base, and what he saw caused him to murmur:

"This is sickening.

"War is indeed appalling, for just see how these poor redmen are piled up here.

"There will be weeping and wailing in old Chief Coyote's village, and the end is not yet."

Leaping into his saddle, and grasping his rifle, Buffalo Bill dashed off in his desperate ride.

It was a dread gantlet he had to run, but he did not shrink from it.

On, on he went like the wind, while a glance up at the cliff showed him that there stood his friends watching his ride for life.

The Indians were riding at full speed, straight across the valley, to head him off.

Could they do it?

The troop of cavalry was coming up the valley along the base of the range, and toward the cliff, for they had seen the scout's signal there.

They were at a trot, and could see that the Indians were assembling about Tombstone Mound in very large force.

They had heard and seen the fight about the cliff and the retreat.

Now that the Indians were returning at a run, a band doubling the troop in numbers, they could not understand it, unless the redskins meant to cut them off.

At this Captain Sands smiled grimly.

A hundred braves would do little against his troop he well knew.

Suddenly one of the scouts of the troop called out:

"There is a horseman yonder coming toward us at full speed."

"That is what those fellows are riding for, to head him off," said Captain Sands, and he raised his glass to his eyes and shouted:

"It is Buffalo Bill!

"We must ride for it!"

The troop uttered a cheer as one man, and at once their horses were put to a gallop.

Buffalo Bill was seen, meanwhile, to put his horse to his full speed and he fairly flew along the valley.

The pace was a terrific one, and the watchers on the cliff shouted with admiration.

The race now became a gantlet, indeed, and all realized it, the scout, those on the cliff, and the troopers.

The braves were lashing their ponies and yelling like demons, as they believed they would head the scout off.

But the horse Buffalo Bill rode was the fleetest on the border, and he went like a bird.

The scout was seen to raise his rifle, as he drew nearer, and then shortly after a puff of smoke shot from the muzzle, and the sharp, ringing report was heard.

Down went the ponies, but no brave fell, that was seen.

"Cody is killing the ponies.

"It serves just as well, and he is ever merciful," said Lieutenant Winston.

The band of horsemen were not checked, however, but came on like an avalanche.

The soldiers were yet over half a mile away, the scout could press no further to the right, as a ravine ran there, and the Indians were not three hundred yards from him.

If they held straight on they would very nearly head the scout off.

It seemed a desperate moment for the scout and he knew it.

Suddenly he wheeled his horse to the left, and darted away straight toward the Tombstone Mound.

What could he mean. There was halting quickly by the Indians, turning about, and then a race back the way they had come.

But the scout had gained much while the Indians were halting and turning in disorder, and again turning his shots upon them and bringing down the nearest ponies, he bore away straight for Tombstone Mound, wheeled suddenly, and started down the valley toward the troop.

It was a most clever ruse, and successfully executed, the redskins howling in rage at having been outwitted and showering upon him a fire from their guns and bows.

But, though the bullets flew thick, none touched him, and, as he sped on, his foes now had to turn to face the troop.

"Halt! Fire!" were the orders from Captain Sands, and as the carbines rattled the troop was given the further command:

"Charge!"

But the volley had been a deadly one, and the Indians were in full flight at once, while Colonel Coyote was bringing other braves up to attack the troopers.

"Have you a courier to send back for reinforcements, sir, for the Indians are a thousand strong and more to come?" shouted Buffalo Bill, as he rode toward the troop.

"Troops are coming, but I will send a courier, my brave Cody, to hasten them on.

"Do you know a place to which I can retreat?"

"Yes, sir," and as Cody dashed up and halted by the side of the captain, while the soldiers gave him a ringing cheer, he continued:

"To the cliff yonder, sir, and which you can hold against ten thousand Indians; but the courier, sir!"

"He shall start at once," and one of the best-mounted men of the troop was called up and given his orders as to what he was to tell Colonel Duncan, but, if he met a force on the way, to report to the commanding officer, and leave it to his discretion as to what was best to be done.

Off went the courier at a run, while, turning to Captain

Sands, Buffalo Bill, who had been watching the movements of the Indians, said:

"Now, sir, you will have no time to lose in reaching the cliff, as it will be well to halt to water the horses and fill canteens before going up.

"Old Colonel Coyote is the chief of that band, and he is determined to throw his whole force upon you, and his braves are desperate now."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RETREAT.

Captain Sands knew that Buffalo Bill was seldom at fault in his prognostications of Indians' intentions.

He was aware that the scout understood the situation, and he at once gave the order to ride for the cliff at a gallop.

At the base a halt was made to fill the canteens and water the horses, and as fast as the latter drank they were run up the steep trail to the top.

Lieutenant Winston meanwhile had had the men lead the animals already on the cliff down to water, and refill the canteens, while each was allowed to crop a few mouthfuls of grass.

This gave them a hold against starvation.

Some dry wood was gathered by the troop at the base of the cliff, and as fast as the men could they took position among the rocks to fight back the redskins, now charging upon them with full force.

Buffalo Bill had asked for half a dozen men to be sent to the top of the cliff, to report to Lieutenant Winston and fight from there with the outlaw guns, while he remained below.

The men that led the pack animals up and the horses of the troopers did this, and all were in position to give the Indians a check as they advanced.

"Well, Cody, you have had hot work here, from the looks of the dead braves and ponies," said Captain Sands.

"Yes, sir, it was red-hot for the Indians, but we were comparatively safe."

"You deserved to be, fighting the odds you had to."

"You have now tremendous odds to meet, also, sir, for there are a thousand reds yonder, if there is one."

"And you think there will be more?"

"Yes, sir, for Colonel Coyote always travels with a small army.

"I guess he wanted to make a grand sweep of it before he retired from control of the fighting forces, for the younger chiefs are anxious to come to the front; but here they are."

Buffalo Bill stood by the side of Captain Sands, behind a boulder, and where every man could be seen by them.

The troopers were scattered about on the steep side of the hill, behind rocks and where they could do deadly execution with their carbines and with revolvers should the Indians come near enough.

Each man knew this danger, and that it must be a fight to the death.

"If they gain the base of the cliff, sir, the men can retreat up the trail, while Lieutenant Winston on the summit can protect them," Buffalo Bill had said.

Each man had been therefore given his orders as to just what he was to do, should they not check the redskins at the first volley.

The redskins were now in a mass, rushing directly for the cliff.

They felt confident that the fifty troopers and the men on the cliff were all that they had to deal with, and twenty to one against them, they were determined to wipe the palefaces out.

Colonel Coyote, the old chief, was determined to end his career in a blaze of glory, or fall there on the field, and thus atone for his defeat.

His braves were with him heart and hand.

"Now, sir, they are coming within good range," said Buffalo Bill.

Captain Sands gave a glance at his scattered men and shouted:

"Throw no shot away, men!

"Fire!"

The carbines flashed, and the leading braves and horses seemed to melt away.

But on they came.

"We cannot check them here, sir, but on the cliff we can.

"We can cover the retreat with the officers' repeating rifles, those of the four scouts and mine."

The captain saw that Buffalo Bill had covered the situation well.

Nothing could check that tremendous force from carrying the position, and so he ordered a retreat up to the top of the cliff, just as the mass of redskins were near its base, and were throwing themselves from their ponies to make the climb to where the soldiers were.

The order was given, and the troopers began to run for the trail, which they had been told was not wide enough to allow of more than two men abreast.

With his own repeating rifle, for the officers carried such weapons for sport, he had two lieutenants and his surgeon also armed with them, while in addition there were four scouts in his command, belonging to Buffalo Bill's Rangers in Buckskin, as they were called.

These rifles, with that of the chief of scouts, made nine of these deadly weapons to cover the retreat of the soldiers with.

And nobly these nine men stood their ground and pumped the lead into the faces of the Indians, thus giving the soldiers good time to retreat.

But still the redskins came on, and the weapons were empty.

Showers of arrows, and bullets from the rifles and muskets of the redskins that had them filled the air.

Several of the soldiers in the rear fell, and then one of the lieutenants.

Next one of the scouts dropped dead, and the revolvers were drawn and emptied as the little band retreated.

But just then from over the cliff came showers of rocks, and Lieutenant Winston was heard distinctly as he ordered:

"Now cover the retreat of those noble fellows!"

From the cliff came pouring down a rain of bullets, and the redskins about the captain and his little party were cut down by the score.

"Now we can run for it, sir," cried Buffalo Bill, and, carrying their dead with them, the men began to climb.

But just then Captain Sands reeled and fell, wounded at the same time by a bullet and an arrow.

Instantly Buffalo Bill sprang back to his side, and raised him in his arms.

"Leave me, noble Cody, and save yourself," said the wounded captain.

"I'll carry you to the top, sir, if you are dead when I get there," was the plucky reply of the scout.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIGHT WON.

Buffalo Bill kept his word, for he carried the wounded captain to the top of the cliff, and Rupert Rockwell and a number of soldiers came bounding down the trail to help with the dead the little band was carrying.

Close upon them came the panting braves, and there were hundreds in number, but strung out all along the steep trail two abreast.

Seeing that Captain Sands had fallen, Lieutenant Winston rallied the troopers as they came up, and carbines were hastily reloaded and two lone men stood ready to defend the summit of the cliff.

Others were placed with the four outlaws to hurl stones over upon the crowded mass of redskins below and to gather more of the deadly missiles to throw over, and aid them in the work of death.

The scout relinquished the wounded captain to his men, and wheeling quickly reloaded his repeating rifle, the others of his little party doing the same.

Then did the Indians discover their fatal error in making that desperate charge, for they were fairly mowed down while yet a hundred yards from the goal of their hoped-for triumph and revenge.

They could not stand that galling fire of death.

No human nature could do that, while upon the heads of their comrades below fell the hail of rocks.

With wild yells of hate, terror, revenge, and despair, they surged back from the fatal cliff, and those on the trail turned back again in a wild stampede.

"Cease firing!" shouted Lieutenant Winston, as he saw the wave of humanity surge back in retreat, and Buffalo Bill said, admiringly:

"You are the kind that make great soldiers, lieutenant."

"Thanks, Cody, I appreciate the compliment from you, but I could not fire upon my worst foe with his back to me."

The firing ceased suddenly, the rocky rain no longer fell, and upon the plain a thousand braves were flying for their lives from the terrible carnage they had rushed into, leaving a hundred or more dead or dying comrades, and as many ponies, as a proof of their splendid courage and how well they had done their duty.

The moment of the retreat Buffalo Bill had gone with Lieutenant Winston to see Captain Sands.

The surgeon of the troop had already extracted the bullet from his hip and the arrow from his shoulder, and said that the wounds were not fatal.

The dead had been collected, and were a lieutenant, scout, and half a dozen soldiers, and the thorough discipline was not long in getting all in perfect order in a

very few minutes, Rupert Rockwell devoting himself to the wounded along with the troop's surgeon.

"I guess there are some of the Indians you can help, gentlemen, as soon as you have finished here," said Buffalo Bill.

"With pleasure, Mr. Cody, I will go with you now," returned Rupert Rockwell.

"I also, Cody," the surgeon said.

"I will go ahead, sir, with a small guard, for I have had convincing proof that an Indian is dangerous up to his last breath—but be guarded!"

He pointed far down the valley, and all eyes turned in that direction to behold a large body of soldiers just coming into view.

"You go, Cody, and report what has happened, and the exact situation," said Lieutenant Winston, who was now in command.

The scout was pleased at the honor done him, got his horse, and, as one of his own men and a dozen soldiers had already gone down the trail to clear it of the dead and wounded redskins, he at once followed.

It was well that a guard had gone with Rupert Rockwell and the surgeon, as they found a number of Indians very much alive, though badly wounded, several of whom had to be shot before they could be disarmed, though not until one of the soldiers had been killed.

"We will have to look to them, Cody," said the surgeon, as Buffalo Bill passed, and having reached the base of the cliff the scout leaped into his saddle and darted away toward the command now forming line of battle at the entrance to the valley.

Buffalo Bill felt sure that he would have another race for it, but in this he was mistaken, for Chief Coyote realized now that the tables were turned upon him. He saw a couple of hundred soldiers in sight, besides those on the cliff, and he knew now that it was to be a battle royal for mastery, and he formed his braves about Tombstone Mound with the skill of the able general he was.

Down the valley swept Buffalo Bill, watched from the cliff and with the eyes of the soldiers in line of battle upon him.

Night was not far off now, and Major Burbank, in command of the reinforcements, called out to his officers:

"Now we will know it all, gentlemen, for there comes Buffalo Bill, and he can tell us of the hot fight we heard a couple of hours ago," and, as Buffalo Bill dashed up, the whole line burst forth in a cheer of greeting to the king of bordermen.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MAJOR AND THE SCOUT.

The salute so spontaneously given the chief of scouts, he returned with a military salute to Major Burbank, and a wave of his sombrero to the men.

"Well, Cody, I am glad to find you well, after what Pony Bob reported of your situation, though I must confess that you look as though you had been through a siege," and Major Burbank grasped the scout's hand, the latter replying:

"I have been through the mill, sir; in fact, it has been the toughest trail of my life; but I am glad to see you and your men, Major Burbank, as you can see for yourself they are needed."

"Yes, and like the Texan who needed a revolver, needed it bad," answered the major.

"You have about two hundred men, sir?" and Cody glanced over the line.

"Two hundred and ten, all told, Cody, consisting of two troops of cavalry, two companies of mounted infantry, and two light guns, while Sands has fifty, I believe."

"There are fifty-five at the cliff, sir, including myself; but old Colonel Coyote, the chief, has over a thousand braves now in the valley, and I saw couriers ride off for other bands, doubtless."

"He sent scouts toward the fort, but Captain Sands ran upon them, and so they were killed."

"I wish more troops were coming, sir."

"There are, for when I heard the report of the courier from Captain Sands I pushed a man for the fort with full speed, to bring more men, and a couple more light guns, with supplies for several weeks, as I knew that the Indians must be out in heavy force."

"They will not be here before to-morrow, sir."

"No, about noon to-morrow, if they push as I did, for you can see by my horses and men that I lost no time, Cody."

"It is your way, major."

"Well, when messages are sent by you I know what they mean."

"We heard the fighting two hours ago, and lost no time in getting here."

"Now, tell me the situation as it was and is."

This Buffalo Bill did, and it was decided to send one gun and a company of mounted infantry to camp at the spring under the cliff, while the main force encamped where it then was, at the entrance to the valley, so that constant communication could be kept open to the fort.

As the Indians were still at Tombstone Mound, and had not retreated, Buffalo Bill said they would either remain there to await other bands, or steal away in the night.

He believed, however, that old Chief Coyote was rather disposed to fight it out in the open, with his largely superior numbers, than to acknowledge defeat and retreat thus to his village.

The gun and mounted infantry company were at once ordered to the cliff, the piece of artillery being concealed in the march by the horsemen, so that the Indians would not suspect that "wheel guns" had been brought along.

Having started the force on its way Major Burbank asked Buffalo Bill to tell him of his remarkable capture of the ten prisoners, and his bringing them thus far on the way to the fort unaided.

In his modest way Buffalo Bill told his story, from the coming upon the outlaws to the last fight on the cliff, and the major said:

"Well, Cody, I am determined that you shall go through alone to the fort with your prisoners, for you deserve all the glory you can get out of this remarkable capture and tough trail that you have been on."

"Get a good night's rest, feed up your gang of gallow birds, and you can start with them in the morning."

"And leave you in face of a largely superior foe, sir?"

"Well, I know that will go hard for you to do; but I

wish you to harvest the crop of tares you have gathered."

"They will be safe, sir, and I'll delay until we see what Chief Coyote is about, for now I think of it, he is not the redskin to retreat and leave a hundred dead and wounded braves behind him, when he has a show of avenging them."

"You met Mr. Rockwell, you told me, Cody?"

"Yes, sir; he is on the cliff."

"Then you must know, now I come to think of it, that his mission is an important one, for he is in search of a brother who came West and joined the band of Gold Dust Jim's gold-mining outfit."

"Yes, sir, and he said that he had received a letter, written over a month ago, but not signed, saying that his brother was held a prisoner by a band of outlaws up in the Sunset Range, and if not found he and others would be slain, unless they gave up the secret of where their gold was hidden."

"That is just it, and this Mr. Rockwell brought strong letters from officers of the army East, urging Colonel Duncan to do all he could to aid him, and hence Winston was sent out with him to find you, and together you were to go on the search for this missing outfit, for the letter stated that two men, or one, could secure the party, where a large force could not."

"So I understand, sir, and the letter further said that by going to a certain cliff upon the Overland trail, that we would find further directions there, though how or what was not made known."

"Then, Cody, in the face of this, and as delay might prove fatal, it will be best for you to leave with Mr. Rockwell to-morrow, and see what you can find, while we will be within a short distance if you need aid, or, escaping with the outlaw prisoners, are pursued."

"I expect you are right, sir, for though Mr. Rockwell has not urged it, I have seen the delay has tried him greatly."

"I will start with him to-morrow, sir, but I would like to ask you to send my prisoners through to the fort to-night, for one of my scouts and two soldiers would be guard enough."

"Bring them here, and they shall go through," was the answer.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FATAL AMBUSH.

Buffalo Bill returned to the cliff, as the shadows of night settled in the valley.

The soldiers sent by Major Burbank had already reached the camping-place near the base of the spur, and were going into camp, with plenty of grass, water, and wood at hand.

The troop of Captain Sands had come down from the cliff to join them, Lieutenant Winston remaining in command of the home of the Cliff Dwellers, where the wounded captain and others were with the dead and the outlaw prisoners.

About the Tombstone Mound all was darkness.

All knew that the Indians were there, however, and a double line of sentinels was placed about the camp.

Far down the valley gleamed the camp-fires of Major Burbank's men, and upon the cliff a fire had been lighted

of wood carried up for that purpose, by which supper could be cooked.

Arriving at the camp, Buffalo Bill sent several of his scouts to patrol the distance between the two camps, well knowing that Indian scouts would creep in to kill any one passing to and from the cliff to the lower end of the valley.

Upon his arrival upon the cliff, Buffalo Bill found that his prisoners had been humanely freed from all bonds, as they were under guard, to give their cramped limbs a rest.

They had also been given a good supper, and were turning in for the night when their captor arrived.

"Men, I am glad you have had a couple of hours' respite from your bonds, and also a good square meal, for you have a long ride of it before you to-night," said Buffalo Bill.

"That means that you are afraid the Indians will whip your whole force to-morrow, so intend to run off to-night," sneered Bob Brass.

"It means that the force under Burbank will remain here to whip the Indians in the morning, and more troops are now on the way here to drive your red friends to their village; but you go to-night to the fort, so I'll prepare you for your ride now."

"That hangs us, pards," said Bob Brass, and several of the gang groaned.

Calling two of his men to aid him, Buffalo Bill had the hands of the prisoners soon firmly bound again, and then started down the steep trail, their horses having been already taken to feed in the valley a couple of hours before.

Bidding Captain Sands good-by, and telling Rupert Rockwell to await him in the camp below with his own and his pack horses, Buffalo Bill mounted one of the extra horses, to give his own a rest, and the prisoners being now bound to their saddles, he started with them for the encampment of Major Burbank, accompanied only by one of his men in guard, whom he intended to send through to the fort with the captives, and the two soldiers who were to form the rest of the guard on the long night trail.

He had ridden about half the distance and had passed two of his men on the watch, when, as they were winding around a group of boulders along the ravine which the scout had ridden in his race for life in the afternoon, two shots flashed forth, almost under the feet of his horse.

Dead from his saddle fell the man in buckskin riding by the side of Buffalo Bill. While the horse of the chief of scouts sprang up into the air and fell backward upon his rider.

With his rifle slung at his back, and the startling and sudden death of his comrade, his own horse falling and catching beneath his weight, Buffalo Bill was unable to grasp a revolver.

In fact, to have done so would have been his death, as a man bounded toward him, firing a revolver as he did so, and crying:

"This ends you, Buffalo Bill, and now, pards, you are free!"

A yell burst from the prisoners, a man sprang upon

the horse of the dead scout, and another appeared, mounted and leading another arrival.

With a yell the prisoners greeted their rescuers, and ere Buffalo Bill could free himself from beneath his dead horse, the two men had dashed off with the outlaw band they had evidently been on the watch to try and save.

When Buffalo Bill staggered to his feet, bruised and half dazed, the prisoners were disappearing in the darkness and out of range of a revolver.

He swung his rifle around from his back and brought it to his shoulder.

But instantly he lowered it, and said:

"I am supposed to be dead, for that fellow said he ended me.

"It is best that they think so; but I am a rather lively corpse they'll find out yet.

"Those two bullets the fellow fired came pretty near ending me, one just grazing my head, the other glancing upon my belt buckle; but a miss is as good as a mile.

"But wasn't I lucky not to ride my own horse?

"Ah, my poor comrade Ball, they have done for you," and he knelt by the side of the slain scout. A bullet had pierced his brain.

Hearing coming shots, he sprang to his feet.

Then up dashed from two directions two horsemen.

They were his scout sentinels, and they called out together:

"Ho, chief, are you there?"

"Yes, pards, and the prisoners are gone to join the Indians, rescued by two men who were in hiding here among these rocks, and killed poor Ball.

"They shot my horse, and he fell upon me, while one of them gave me a few shots that were close calls and went off with that gang of gallows fruit.

"It was well done, and plucky; but they hit us hard in killing our comrade here.

"I'll borrow your horse, Dan, and go in to report to Major Burbank that my prisoners have escaped me and Scout Ball has been killed."

Mounting the horse, Buffalo Bill admonished the two scouts to keep a bright watch, and then rode on to the camp at the end of the valley.

It was a cruel, a bitter disappointment to him to know that he had lost his prisoners, after all he had to do to capture and hold them; but he took it coolly; and riding at a gallop came upon another of his men, and to him told the story.

"I heard the firing, sir, and was going to see what the trouble was."

"It's all over now, Betts.

"Keep a bright lookout, and I'll return this way soon," and Buffalo Bill rode on to the camp to report his misfortune to Major Burbank.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE NIGHT TRAIL.

The report was made to Major Burbank of the loss of the prisoners, and the scout then said:

"I feel confident, sir, that old Coyote is receiving more reinforcements constantly during the night, and these escaped outlaws add to his force by a dozen desperate men, counting the two who made the clever rescue from me."

"It may be so, Cody, and I am confident that you know best," answered the major.

"Now, sir, the man they call King is a very able fellow, I feel certain, while both Corporal Strong and Bob Brass are splendid allies, and can advise the old chief just what to do."

"That is so, and had advice for us they will give him."

"Yes, sir, for they know our exact force."

"They do?"

"Yes, sir, as they heard all that was said when they were upon the cliff."

"True."

"Your force is a large one, Major Burbank, were the Indians only a thousand in number, but if they double that, why you will be put upon the defensive."

"I feel sure of it."

"Now, may I make a suggestion, sir?"

"Certainly, for all your advice I certainly know the worth of, Cody."

"It is not yet ten o'clock, and, as you wished me to go on with Mr. Rockwell to find Gold Dust Jim's camp, I thought I would return to the cliff for him, get my own horse and his pack animals, and then start directly on the trail toward the fort."

"To the fort?"

"No, sir, toward the fort, for I know a short cut I can make that will save me over a dozen miles, and by taking it I can head off the reinforcements coming to you."

"But why head them off?"

"To guide them off this trail by a flank movement to the head of this valley and then hem the redskins in between three fires, as it were, counting the command at the cliff."

"I think I begin to see your plan."

"It will take us until noon to get into position, perhaps until night, for it is owing to the distance away the coming relief force is."

"And you mean that I am simply to make a bluff of attacking the Indians, to hold them in check until the relief reaches the head of the valley?"

"Yes, sir, for you will not be strong enough to venture far from your camp at the fort here, and I can send a courier to you telling when and where I reach the relief, and about the time it will take us to reach the head of the valley, making it a specified time for your attack, with the cliff force joining you, and the last arrivals to come in at the proper moment to aid you."

"Cody, you are a born general, and if your plan is carried out, if only a hundred men and a couple of light guns come to our aid, we will give these redskins a whipping they will long remember—yes, the Tombstone Mound will serve as a monument to many an Indian brave.

"But, what about Mr. Rockwell?"

"He will go with me, sir, for when we reach the head of the valley, we will be that much upon our way toward the Sunset Range, where Gold Dust Jim is supposed to be."

"Right you are; but send me word by one of your scouts of just the force that is in the relief and all other information you deem necessary."

"I will, sir, and now I must be off."

"Again, Cody, I must express my sympathy for the loss of your prisoners, after all you did to capture and keep them."

"Thank you, major, but I hope to catch them again," and Buffalo Bill spoke hopefully.

"I trust so; but I am glad that it was no worse, and that your life was spared."

"I always seem to be in luck, sir; but you will send for the body of my poor pard, and allow me a horse to ride back to the cliff camp?"

The necessary orders were given and the major warmly grasped the scout's hand in parting.

At a rapid gallop Buffalo Bill rode back over the trail, leading the horse he had borrowed from one of his men, and arriving at the spot where he had so nearly lost his life, he found the scout awaiting by the body of his dead comrade.

A short halt there and he pushed rapidly on to the cliff camp, and quickly told Lieutenant Winston, who was talking with Mr. Rockwell, just what had happened, and what his intention was.

"Well, Cody, your fortunate escape is worth a thousand outlaws' escape, so do not mind it," said the lieutenant.

"I have a sneaking idea, sir, that I shall get those fellows back again," replied the scout.

"I hope so, indeed, and I believe you are going the right way about it."

"I shall keep the way open between my camp and Major Burbank's, and you may be certain it will be sweet music to me to hear your rifles at the head of the valley, for, like you, I believe Chief Coyote is collecting a large force; but I will not detain you now."

Rupert Rockwell and the scout were soon after in the saddle, having had a substantial supper, and with the pack animals of the former in lead they started on the trail that was to prove of so much importance to all.

Passing through Major Burbank's camp just after midnight, the scout set the pace and led the way by the cut-off trail, which would save him all of a dozen miles on his way to meet the reinforcements coming from the fort.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BUFFALO BILL'S LUCK.

"Look there, Mr. Rockwell!"

"Yes, Mr. Cody, camp-fires!"

"Yes, sir, and it is what the boys call 'Buffalo Bill's Luck,' for we have come upon the relief command just as we are turning into the regular trail, so we will be able to quickly be on the march for the head of the valley."

"You are lucky, Cody, as I have noted in our short acquaintance a score of times."

"I believe I am, sir, for somehow I escape many a bullet aimed to kill me."

"And may you always do so; but that appears to be a large force."

"Yes, sir, I have been looking it over, and from the camp-fires would say there were fully two hundred men."

"Then that means a wipe out for the Indians?"

"If we strike them right, it does, sir."

"Lieutenant Winston seemed to think their force would be doubled by morning."

"So I think, sir; but with five hundred soldiers to meet them, we will quickly win, especially as we will have four-wheel guns, as the Indians call the cannon, for I suppose yonder force has brought artillery along."

The two had been riding along for over two hours on their back trail through the darkness, and they had come upon a hill, from which they had discovered a number of camp-fires a couple of miles away.

The scout knew that it was the camp of the relief, and congratulated himself upon coming upon the command so much sooner than he had anticipated doing.

On the two rode at a trot, and, knowing how anxious Rupert Rockwell felt to be on the trail to rescue his brother, Buffalo Bill said:

"Now, we will not be delayed much longer, Mr. Rockwell, for as soon as we get the relief into position at the head of the valley, we will strike off for the ranch of the Gold Dust Jim outfit."

"I shall be glad when we can, Cody, I assure you; but I would not do anything to prevent you from rendering valuable service now when your presence is worth so much."

"The truth is, my brother left home to make his own way in the world unaided, and because he was under a cloud with our father."

"After he had been gone a year, the secret came out that he had shielded a friend in a crime, and was not guilty as accused."

"This friend was caught in a lawless act one day, arrested, tried, proven guilty, and sent to prison for a long term of years."

"His private papers fell into the hands of his sister, whom my brother Ramsey greatly loved, and she, discovering through them just who had been the guilty one, came to my father and told him all."

"Father at once sought to find my brother, but died soon after, and left him half heir with myself to all his wealth, where he had cut him off without a legacy even, when he had believed him guilty."

"As soon as I could settle up the estate, I set to work to find my brother, and at last got a trace of him in the far West here, so started out to look him up."

"Receiving my mail, forwarded to the fort, I found an unsigned letter addressed to me, telling me that my brother had gone out with Gold Dust Jim's Gold Hunters, and he, with others, were held by outlaws for ransom, and to be put to death, if it was not paid, or, rather, they did not make known where certain treasure was hidden."

"Now, Mr. Cody, you know just why I wish your aid, and am anxious to find my brother before harm befalls him, and I have perfect confidence in your ability to discover and save him, and will show you the letter I have with the directions given by the writer."

"We must find him, Mr. Rockwell, and I will try and show that your confidence in me is not misplaced," said the scout.

They had now drawn near to the camp, and a sentinel, hidden in a clump of pines, sang out sharply:

"Halt! Who goes there?"

The scout answered the challenge by giving his name, and they were soon taken to where Captain Keyes, the commander of the relief force, was having a late supper,

for he had only halted for a couple of hours in his rapid march to aid those sent before.

The captain greeted Buffalo Bill warmly, and having met Rupert Rockwell at the fort, extended also to him a most cordial welcome.

Then he heard the scout's report, condoled with him upon the loss of his prisoners, and congratulated him upon the rescue he had accomplished thus far.

"You have certainly had a hard time of it, Cody, and you, Mr. Rockwell, will soon become a thorough borderman the way you have begun, and in our chief of scouts here you have the ablest tutor upon the frontier," said Captain Keyes.

Then he added:

"But to my force, Cody, that you asked about.

"I have three troops of cavalry, two companies of mounted infantry, four light guns, and ten scouts, three hundred in all."

"Good! then there is nothing to fear, should old Coyote have five times your force, sir."

"Do you think I had best send a gun and a troop to Major Burbank, Cody?"

"A gun and a troop would be just what the major would need, sir, and one of the scouts can guide them there by dawn.

"The Indians would not know of their arrival, and I would like to send a scout ahead, sir, so that Major Burbank would know of their coming and could dispatch one of his guns to Lieutenant Winston at the cliff, for that would equalize matters."

"The very thing, Cody.

"But as to ourselves, now?"

"You can move in half an hour, sir, and I will guide you to the head of the valley, and we can get there in six hours' hard march and surprise the redskins, hemming them in between three fires."

"We'll do it, and we will move within half an hour, Cody," was the answer of the gallant captain.

Just on time the command was on the move, the force for Major Burbank going straight on the trail, and Buffalo Bill riding by a flank movement to the head of the valley.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BATTLE IN THE VALLEY.

The scout led the command of Captain Keyes at a brisk pace by a very passable trail.

The men had been greatly pleased that Buffalo Bill was to guide them, for all had perfect confidence in the chief of scouts.

That there was trouble ahead, that the Indians were in large force, that something had gone wrong, they well understood, else five hundred men would not have been sent so quickly from the fort.

They soon were on their way, and crossing a stream soon after, a halt was called for breakfast.

Buffalo Bill pushed on ahead with his dozen scouts, and strung them out in a line back to the command, each one making a well-defined trail that the soldiers might follow readily.

Another halt at noon; then Captain Keyes would go on slowly, awaiting reports from the chief guide.

They soon came—that the Indians were attacking Ma-

jor Burbank's forces, as the firing could be heard over the mountain.

Buffalo Bill saw by the trail that more Indians had gone into the valley than he had thought, so he sent a scout back to hasten the command on.

Buffalo Bill was then in the upper entrance to the valley, and leaving his horse he climbed a steep hill for a survey of the situation.

The main force of Indians was about Tombstone Mound. Large numbers of braves had been thrown out on each side to harrass the two camps of soldiers as much as possible.

There had been a rush upon each camp, but the ponies and dead braves scattered about showed that it had been repulsed.

"They did not attack with all their force, but found out the strength of the soldiers, and are preparing for a grand charge.

"Yes, they have considerably over two thousand warriors here, and they are now moving to the attack.

"Captain Keyes must push on, or they may overwhelm both commands in the valley, desperate as they have become from their losses, and thirsting as they do for revenge. Ah! there comes the captain now."

Hastening down to the trail again, Buffalo Bill met Captain Keyes and Rupert Rockwell, who had ridden to the front with him.

"The men will soon be up, Cody. What have you discovered?"

"We have a large force to fight, sir, and—hark! they are moving now with every brave upon the two camps!"

The yells of the savages were deafening, and the thunder of the troops of ponies could be distinctly heard.

Another moment and the three light guns began to open from Major Burbank's and Lieutenant Winston's commands, and then followed the rattle of rifles and carbines.

The fight had begun.

Would the Indians sweep over the brave bands of soldier boys before help came up?

No! Into sight came a troop of cavalry, then another; then the mounted infantry and the guns.

They came at a trot; they wheeled into line across the valley, a gun upon either flank, one in the center; the mounted infantry, dismounted now, protected the flanks, and they came just in time.

The hundreds and hundreds of warriors were pressing the two forces hard now, and it had come to a fight for life, indeed, for the old chief, Colonel Coyote, was willing to lose five hundred warriors to wipe out the foes there before him.

Interested in the battle before them, and with the din of battle in their ears, the redskins, a hundred in number, most of them wounded, the rest a guard left at Tombstone Mound, did not see or hear the reserve party in their rear until a volley from the infantry mowed them down.

Then upon the crowded mass of braves and horses in the valley the guns opened, hurling shells in their midst; the Tombstone Mound was carried, and the position gained for a stronghold, all the outfit of the Indian army thus being captured, and that fateful line of battle upon the rear of the fighting warriors attained.

The infantry fired deadly rounds; the carbines of the cavalry flashed incessantly; the guns roared death from their rifled rims, and the old chief, who, a moment before, had victory almost in his grasp, saw his braves go down by the score, saw them turn in dazed fright, beaten, demoralized, and crowding together in dismay as they knew not which way to turn.

They were hemmed in, and the soldiers were throwing a band of steel about them, for Major Burbank and Lieutenant Winston were advancing to meet Captain Keyes!

Old Colonel Coyote was struck by a shell and torn to pieces; other chiefs had fallen; still that circle of steel pressed closer and closer.

Suddenly a horseman dashed to the front and rode toward the redskin band then huddling together with desperate resolve.

The horseman was Buffalo Bill!

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TWO CHIEFS.

"Cease firing!"

The order came from the commander of the guns in Major Burbank's command, from the captains of the cavalry, and from those of the mounted infantry.

The order was followed by Captain Keyes and Lieutenant Winston, also willing to stop the carnage, and, as Major Burbank was the commander, his order was quickly carried out.

The horseman rode straight toward the Indians crowded together in the center of the valley, silent and desperate, standing at bay to be attacked, to die then, as they supposed.

It was a bold thing for Buffalo Bill to do, but he did not hesitate.

He rode in a sweeping gallop, his hands raised above his head in token of peace, and halted within easy revolver range of the Indian mass.

"I come to my red brothers in peace; no arms are in my hands. I come for a talk with the chiefs of their young men!"

The words were spoken in the Indian tongue, and were uttered in a loud, clear voice.

A moment of awful suspense; then one chief rode out of the mass.

He was young, mounted splendidly, and rode straight toward the scout, holding in his hand a torn and bloody war bonnet.

Halting, he held it up, and asked in thunder tones:

"Does the great white chief Pa-e-has-ka come with the words of peace upon his lips, when I hold up to his eyes the blood-stained war bonnet of my dead father, the great chief, Colonel Coyote, who has been killed by the wheel guns of his people?"

All awaited the reply, and it came boldly and defiantly:

"The braves of the great chief, Coyote, are away from their village, looking for paleface scalps. The old chief led them upon a trail of death, so let his son be the great leader to bid them follow him upon the trail of peace.

"My red brothers have suffered terribly; their young men lie dead and unburied; their braves lie groaning with wounds upon the field; their ponies have gone down by the hundred.

"The palefaces are about them; their wheel guns are

ready to tear through their ranks; the white warriors are ready to send bullets into their hearts and to cut them down with big knives that kill by a blow.

"Let them listen to my words! Let them hear that the white chief of my people is here to bid them keep their weapons and their ponies; to have them look to their wounded, to bury their dead, to eat of the food he has brought with him, and to say to them:

"Return to your village and live in peace with your brothers.

"Has the young chief, the son of the great Coyote, heard? Will he heed, and become a leader of his people for peace, as his father led them to war, or will he close his ears and then hear the roar of the wheel guns, the rattle of the rifles, and see his young braves cut down by the knives before his eyes?

"Pa-e-has-ka has spoken! He awaits the reply of the young chief."

Every word uttered had sunk deep into the heart of the young chief. His braves had heard also.

He had a large band of young braves, yet there were older chiefs who would now wish to rule the tribe.

The son of Coyote saw his chance, for the braves were broken in heart and frightened. He would seize upon the opportunity and become the apostle of peace, at least for the time being.

To his people a word would tell his true position. They were at the mercy of the whites then. They could be wiped out, and their tribe would no longer hold power.

He turned and rode toward his people, halted, and uttered a few words—a very few.

Then a chief cried:

"The Red Bear had a great father. The great Chief Coyote had a coward son. My young men will fight!"

The young chief, Red Bear, rode slowly toward the one who had called him a coward son of a brave father.

He halted near him, poised his lance, and cried:

"It is better that one chief more should die than my people be shot down like buffalo.

"I will kill the chief who wishes to see my braves die."

He gave a wild warcry and spurred forward, his lance already leveled.

The chief was ready to meet him, and stood his ground firmly. The braves sat breathless upon their ponies.

The result of this duel would decide them as to what they would do.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TURNED BACK ON THE TRAIL.

Buffalo Bill had not moved from his position, in full view of the Indians and the commands surrounding them, and his eagle eye was watching the situation.

Did the Red Bear fall in the duel, Buffalo Bill knew how great was his own danger.

The braves, still very strong, would make a rush to break the line of soldiers and escape from the valley.

They would leave hundreds of dead and wounded behind, would get no scalps, would have to sacrifice their outfit, go a couple of hundred miles to their village without food.

And what a tale they would have to tell, while the soldiers would be on their trail to attack their village.

Major Burbank wondered at Buffalo Bill's bold move.

He had not been consulted, in fact could not have been, as matters then were.

Captain Keyes must have had some good reason, Major Burbank thought, for ordering Buffalo Bill to do as he had. Lieutenant Winston had the same thought.

But Captain Keyes was as much surprised as was Major Burbank, for the chief of scouts had acted without his knowledge.

A couple of scouts had been seen to dash up to Buffalo Bill, a hurried consultation had followed. Major Burbank just then had ordered his men to cease firing, and then the chief of scouts had ridden with uplifted hands toward the Indians huddled together and preparing for some desperate move.

This was all that was known, and events following were eagerly watched.

Every eye was upon the two chiefs who were to fight the duel then and there for mastery.

The young chief, Red Bear, settled himself well in his saddle, gave his defiant warcry, and went at his rival with deadly intent in his eye.

The other prepared to meet him, poised his lance, and the two chiefs met.

The lance of one was struck up, the keen point of his foe pierced his breast, and he was hurled backward from his saddle.

The victor wheeled his pony, faced Buffalo Bill, and, riding slowly toward him, lifted his hands above his head and cried:

"My people lay down the hatchet! Let my white brother prove that he speaks with a straight tongue."

"Pa-e-has-ka is glad. He has spoken straight. He will bring the white chief to speak with him."

Wheeling his horse, Buffalo Bill dashed straight off to where Major Burbank was seated upon his horse.

"Major Burbank," said the scout, saluting as he rode up, "I have to report, sir, that the Indians, now under young Chief Red Bear, have surrendered."

"I acted as I did, sir, without authority, as two of my scouts reported that fully a thousand more warriors are on the march for this valley, and not twenty miles away, sir!"

"By heaven, Cody, you did just right! I'll guard the passes into the valley at once, Captain Keyes' force the upper one, mine the lower one, and Winston as a support. Now I will go and arrange with the chief."

The major gave the necessary orders to go into camp in the passes, but the men to keep their arms ready and remain in line of battle.

Then he met the Chief Red Bear, and it was arranged that the Indians were to camp in the center of the valley, upon a small stream, have their outfit sent to them, and provisions given them from the soldiers' supplies.

They were to collect their dead and bury them; the white surgeons were to care for their wounded, and, after a few days they could start on the way to their villages.

This attended to, as night was coming on, a couple of the guns, a troop of cavalry and a company of mounted infantry were slipped quietly away to the head of the valley and placed there to meet the coming warriors, while a scout who spoke the Indian tongue well, accompanied by two of the redskins captured in the first attack of Captain Keyes upon Tombstone Mound, were sent off

to meet the band that was coming and tell them what had happened, endeavoring to turn them back to their village.

This had been Buffalo Bill's suggestion to Major Burbank, for, did the large band arrive, they might influence an outbreak of those who had submitted, feeling confident in their increased strength to overwhelm the soldiers.

After most anxious hours of waiting the scout returned, accompanied by one of the Indians who had gone with him, and a chief and half a dozen warriors from the coming band.

They had heard the sad story, and the chief had come to see for himself the exact truth of the situation.

He was fully convinced, as the scout whispered to Buffalo Bill:

"There are not two hundred able-bodied warriors in the lot, Chief Cody, the rest being old men and boys. They only come to get booty, as they were sure that old Chief Coyote was going to wipe the palefaces off of the face of the earth."

"Then, Charlie, this investigating chief will be only too glad to get off and report to his people the situation, taking great credit to himself for bringing his command back in safety," said Buffalo Bill, adding:

"Now, I am about used up, but must start at once with Mr. Rockwell on our trail to find Gold Dust Jim, for if I leave camp by day I may be followed by some of these redskins."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AGAIN IN THE TOILS.

To the surprise of the officers and the scout, the escaped outlaws had not been found among the Indians.

If they had joined them at all, and this they must have done after their escape, they did not remain with them. The braves professed to know nothing about them.

Buffalo Bill, however, was determined to have proof, and each one of his scouts had been ordered to go among the braves looking for white men painted and rigged as Indians, but not one had been found.

"That fellow, King, is cunning and clever, and knew when to desert, for he was well aware that more troops were on the way, and that the redskins would be bagged or severely whipped, so he skipped. We will next hear of them at their old work on the trails," said Buffalo Bill.

"You are right, Cody; but now I desire to express to you my great appreciation of your most valuable services," said the major commanding.

"But for you Captain Keyes would not have reached us in time to save us, and by leading him to the head of the valley, you simply hemmed in the Indians.

"By your boldness in going to meet them, you forced their surrender, and then checked the advance of the band coming to their aid.

"These services you have rendered all of us, and your government, while before my coming, you certainly did a great deal for Lieutenant Winston, then for Captain Sands, while your capture and keeping possession of your

prisoners as you did, was a most remarkable act of heroism, endurance, and nerve unequalled.

"Now you are going upon a very dangerous trail, and I wish to let you know before you go, and in the presence of my brother officers and Mr. Rockwell, who is to be your companion, just what we soldiers, one and all, think of you."

Buffalo Bill doffed his sombrero and bowed low at the very complimentary words of Major Burbank, who added:

"Let me say that I send a courier to-night to the fort with a full report to Colonel Duncan, and you are the one to whom I give full credit for all that has been accomplished."

"Now, as you deem it best to start to-night, with Mr. Rockwell, I say good-by to you both and wish you good luck. We will at least be here for some days, should you have to call upon us for aid."

"I will remember it, sir, and I hope to have to do so," replied Buffalo Bill, "for I have not given up the idea of catching those outlaws again."

Ten minutes later Buffalo Bill and Rupert Rockwell rode out of the valley leading their two pack animals.

"We will go a dozen miles, Mr. Rupert, then wait to see that we are not followed. If not shadowed, we will seek a good camp and have the rest we both so much need," Buffalo Bill explained.

After a ride of a couple of hours Buffalo Bill turned out of the trail to a canyon, where he knew there was a good camping-place, and leaving Rockwell to unsaddle the horses, stake them out, and spread the blankets, he returned to lie in ambush upon the trail to see if they had been dogged from Tombstone valley.

For ten minutes the scout had been in ambush behind a boulder upon the trail, his revolver and rifle ready, and lariat by his side, when he saw a horse and rider coming toward him on the trail leading to the Sunset Mountains, the same that he and Rupert Rockwell were following. The man came on slowly, but Buffalo Bill felt sure he was following him.

Another moment and the scout's lariat had been thrown unerringly, and settling over the head of the rider, it was drawn taut, while, with a bound, Buffalo Bill grasped the rein of the startled horse, and a revolver held in the other hand covered his man.

"Surrender, or die!"

"I surrender, Buffalo Bill, for it seems my fate to be led to the gallows by you," was the quivering response.

"Ah! You are Corporal Dave Strong?"

"Yes."

"And your outlaw comrades?"

"Deserted me; left me, among the Indians."

"Hold out your hands for these irons."

The man obeyed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MANACLED MESSENGER.

The spirit of the captured corporal seemed crushed, and he obeyed the scout as meekly as a lamb.

It was a great surprise to Rupert Rockwell, of course, but explanations followed and the scout proceeded to question his prisoner.

"Now, Strong, I want the truth from you. Who aided those outlaws to escape from me?"

"Two outlaws, members of the band, who found out from the Indians that their comrades were your prisoners."

"They suspected you would send your prisoners to the fort at night. They laid an ambush for you, and you know the rest."

"They did not remain with the Indians?"

"They left yesterday, and so deserted me. I remained with the Indians, intending to live with them; but finding that you had them hemmed in, escaped."

"I took the trail after the outlaws, but camped and saw you come along, for I knew you even in the dark."

"I then followed you, sure that you were upon the outlaws' trail, and that more was to follow, so I made up my mind I would get ahead and warn them, thus making myself solid with them."

"They have gone to Sunset Mountains, where the man you know as Bob Brass has a retreat and some allies. I do not know where this retreat is, but I intended to follow their trail."

"Dave Strong, I believe you have told me the truth, and I feel sorry that I cannot in some way repay you. I feel sorry for you; but my duty is to take you back to the fort, if I can get you there, and then I will say all in your favor I can, if you will aid us now all in your power."

"I thank you, Chief Cody, but I do not expect any mercy. I killed the sergeant in a fit of anger, and then had to take the life of the sentinel to make my escape."

"I will not be any bother to you, though you know if I can escape I shall do so."

Buffalo Bill and Rupert Rockwell made the man as comfortable as they could; then they turned in for the half dozen hours of sleep they so greatly required.

It was sunrise when they awoke. The horses were watered and staked in fresh grazing ground, a fire was built, a good breakfast prepared and eaten, and then they started upon the trail once more.

So sure had the now eleven outlaws been that the Indians would drive the soldiers back to the fort that they had made no attempt to cover up their trail.

Noting this fact, and conscious that he could track the outlaws to their lair, Buffalo Bill decided to make an effort to send back word for aid.

He did not wish to be hampered with the corporal, and, glancing at the prisoner as he drew rein, he said:

"Strong, I am going to send you back to the command on my horse, to bear a message to Major Burbank."

"You will trust me, then?"

"In a measure I must, and what you tell the major will go far toward gaining mercy for you in your trial."

"My horse is as obedient and sensible as a human being. I will change your saddle and bridle to him, and dispatch him to the camp."

"He will go there at a gallop, and, ironed as you will be, and tied to your saddle, you cannot check him if you would."

"You are to tell Major Burbank to send my scouts after me, twenty of them at least, and, if he will do so, have Lieutenant Winston also come along."

"They are to follow my trail. I will mark it well, and either Mr. Rockwell or myself will head them off on it."

"If the major cares to send a surgeon along, also, I will be glad to have him do so, for I anticipate red work."

"I shall write this all down and pin it upon your breast, in case some Indian might put an arrow in you, for my horse will take you to camp, dead or alive."

The letter to Major Burbank was written, pinned on the corporal's coat, and his saddle having been put upon Buffalo Bill's horse, the intelligent and faithful animal was led back on the trail, turned loose, and then told to go to camp with his manacled rider.

At once he started off at a gallop, apparently fully understanding what was expected of him.

CHAPTER XXX.

FOUND.

The manacled messenger started back for camp; Buffalo Bill and Rupert Rockwell started on their trail. The Sunset Mountains were just before them, and along their base ran the stage trail, and the coaches only went each way once each two weeks.

One was due, Buffalo Bill knew, upon the following day, and he felt sure that the outlaws would hold it up, as it often carried considerable gold.

The two men went along this stage trail, which the outlaws had also used, for their tracks were plainly visible.

It was well on in the afternoon when the scout drew rein.

"Look there!" he suddenly cried, pointing to a cliff a short distance off, and near which stood a man.

"Come! I can catch him with my lariat if he remains where he is until we get near him; if not, a bullet will halt him."

"He has not discovered us yet, you think?"

"Not yet, and he seems to be very deeply engaged in cutting into the cliff."

They pressed on toward the cliff, but the man continued his work, not seeming to hear the hoof falls of the horses.

As they approached closer the man was seen to be roughly clad and uncouth looking in the extreme, with his unkempt hair and beard. More, they saw that the man was cutting into the soft stone that formed the cliff the words:

"Save us——"

That was sufficient to show that the man could not be a very dangerous character, or one of the outlaw gang; so Buffalo Bill called out:

"Ho, pard! you request is answered, for we are here to save you!"

The man started, dropped the instrument he was working with, turned quickly, his face blanched with fear, and beheld the two horsemen.

One look he gave, and then from his lips broke the cry:

"My prayer is answered! You are Buffalo Bill!"

"Yes, but I fail to recall where I have met you before, pard."

"Louder, please, for I am quite deaf!"

"So I thought," and Buffalo Bill repeated his words.

"I was a soldier at Fort Kearney when you were there; but I turned to gold hunting when I had served out my enlistment."

"I think I recall you now as Ned Roberts of the artillery."

"That's my name, Mr. Cody, and I was deafened by the bursting of a gun."

"Yes, I know you now; but what are you doing here?"

"I am a prisoner."

"Whose prisoner are you?"

"The leader of the Mounted Gold Miners, as the outlaw band call themselves."

"Tell me your story. How is it your captors allow you to go free?"

"They do not—see there!" and he held up a pair of steel manacles for the wrists and pointed to another pair for the ankles.

"I have a key that fits them, and between the visits of my guard, I free myself and go out on the trail, hoping to meet some soldiers or a party to save me. I know that the coach passes this cliff, so was cutting here a sign the driver would notice and so send us help."

"Who is with you?"

"Gold Dust Jim and a young man we call Rocks, but that isn't his real name."

"What is his real name?"

"Rockwell."

"Ah! Where is he?"

"He and Gold Dust Jim are in the canyon where the outlaws have their camp."

"How far from here?"

"About five miles."

"How many outlaws are there?"

"There were only three until last night Captain King came in with a man who is his spy in the mining camps, and about a dozen men they had gotten together for holding up coaches and pony riders, and for robbing miners."

"I see. But why do they keep you a prisoner?"

"You see, I belonged to Gold Dust Jim's outfit, and we struck it rich, getting a big strike of paying gold for all of us by placer mining. We hid our treasure and started out for horses to pack it to the fort, but were fired upon from ambush and four of our boys were killed."

"We three were spared and made prisoners, and they have been trying to force from us by torture and threats to tell where our gold was hidden."

"One of the outlaws was a wagoner at the fort when I was there, and I saved his life, so he sent a letter out for Rocks' brother, telling how we were fixed."

"Now you know it all, Chief Cody."

"And rest assured that you shall soon be set free, Roberts. Now go back at once to your camp and tell your companions that you have seen me, and that Mr. Rupert Rockwell got that letter and is here with me."

"Tell them that I have my band of scouts coming, and if they arrive to-night we will rescue you all. If they do not arrive, you are to look for our coming each night."

"Now tell me just how to reach your camp."

"It is hard to direct you, sir, but——"

"Never mind; we will go into camp and I will accompany you on foot. Then I will know."

The camp was found, and, half an hour after, Buffalo Bill was on the trail to the outlaw retreat, leaving Rockwell to await his return and watch for the coming of the scouts, for he did not doubt but that his horse had reached camp with the manacled rider.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CONCLUSION.

Buffalo Bill returned to camp in the night, and found Rupert Rockwell on guard.

"I have been to the outlaws' retreat, and at a distance have seen them. They are all there, King, Bob Brass, and twelve others, fourteen in all. They are preparing to hold up the east-bound coach to-morrow.

"They are in a canyon, with two entrances that are mere crevices in the cliffs, but it widens out when you get inside.

"We can approach by each end, or go down by foot by way of the cliff, the trail Ned Roberts comes and goes, and which the outlaw who wrote that letter told him of. This trail one man can guard, so no escape can be made by it.

"Hemmed in, they will fight hard, but we will have a dozen more men, and every one of the bandits will be killed or taken prisoner.

"I also found that King is a man who was known in the Red Willow mining settlement as Rex Ridgeley, and who disappeared, Bob Brass coming to take his cabin, while he went into the road agent business.

"If my scouts arrive to-night we will make the attack, for delays are dangerous."

It was just an hour after that the quick ear of the scout detected the thud of hoofs. Quickly placing himself in hiding on the trail, he heard a voice say:

"We won't go no further to-night, but camp here."

"Lieutenant Winston!"

"Ay, ay, Cody! I know that voice!"

"My horse went true, then, sir?"

"Indeed he did, for here we are, Surgeon Taylor, twenty-one of our scouts, four soldiers and myself, twenty-seven all told."

"Good! For, with Mr. Rockwell and myself, we will double the band in numbers."

"Have you discovered anything?"

"Everything, sir."

"Excellent; but how lucky you captured the corporal; but who killed him?"

"Was he dead?"

"Yes, he had been shot through the head."

"Poor fellow, though it was better so; but he left us all right, sir."

"So your note to the major said, but you have come in on the run into camp, as though frightened."

"Some Indians, doubtless, shot him, sir; but, shall we make the attack to-night?"

"At once, if you wish."

"Yes, sir; it is best."

In ten minutes the little command was on the march, and after going several miles Buffalo Bill showed where they were to divide their forces, Lieutenant Winston going with one party.

A scout and a soldier were led to the trail down the cliff by Buffalo Bill, who then went around with the rest of his men to the other entrance to the canyon.

Leaving their horses in the entrances to the canyon, with one man to guard them, the two parties, under Lieutenant Winston and Buffalo Bill, led the way to the cabins, and a loud knock at the doors was followed by:

"Turn out, men! The prisoners are escaping."

It was Cody who spoke.

The doors opened, and the outlaws came swarming out.

It was a quick, sharp, deadly fight, men going down on both sides, killed and wounded.

But it was a complete triumph for Buffalo Bill and his men. Bob Brass and six outlaws were killed, while King and the others, several of them wounded, were taken prisoners.

The attacking party suffered the loss of a scout and soldier killed and half a dozen others wounded.

In one of the cabins, apart from the others, were found the three prisoners, Gold Dust Jim, Ramsey Rockwell, and Ned Roberts, and happy indeed were they at their release.

Half a hundred horses and some booty were the results of the victory, while that day the prisoners led the way to where they gold was hidden, and it was carried into the camp of Major Burbank, along with the prisoners and captured horses.

The Indians then had taken up the march for their villages, carrying their wounded, and as there was no longer need for the troops to remain in the valley, the march was taken up for the fort.

This, Buffalo Bill's toughest trail, made him more than ever a hero and the idol of the army on the frontier.

With the execution of King and his followers the Mounted Gold Miners were wholly wiped out.

The Rockwell brothers started upon their return East, where Ramsey soon after married the woman he had ever loved, and whose confession of a brother's crime had taken the shadow off of his life.

In their happy homes to-day Ramsey and Rupert Rockwell often entertain as an honored guest the great Scout of the Border, the man whom they knew as he was in all his bold deeds and adventurous life, and often tell of the terrible trail he followed in his pursuit of the Mounted Gold Hunters of the Overland.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 87) will contain, "Buffalo Bill's Tenderfoot Pard; or, The Boys in Black." How a couple of tenderfeet in the Wild West became the pards of Buffalo Bill, together with their adventures fighting outlaws and Indians, will be told in this story, which is full of thrills and interest all through.

CURIOUS DREAMS



Now then, boys!
It's up to you!
Send us your dreams and win a prize.
For full particulars, see page 31.

A Bear Dream.

(By Edmund A. Kellogg, New York City.)

One night I dreamed that I was playing about in my bathing suit with a friend of mine named Ralph. We were playing tag, and I was "it." Just as I was going to tag Ralph a great number of bears filed up and began chasing Ralph and myself.

Ralph saw a vessel out at sea and called, "Come on, Ed, lets swim out to it." So we jumped into the water and started to swim, but the bears followed us, and were just going to catch me when I awoke.

A Simple Dream.

(By Charles Kennery, Milford, N. J.)

It was a dark, rainy, dismal night, and I retired early and I soon drifted away into dreamland.

I fancied a companion and myself had become separated from our friends and guide up in "The Great North Woods."

I imagined we were treading our way through the woods and could hear the bark of wolves, and thought there were all kinds of wild animals around us, but not near enough to us to do any harm.

I thought, as we were moving hopelessly around, we came upon a deserted cabin, in a small clearing, and that we entered, glad to get in shelter.

As we entered, we thought we heard a groan coming from some one inside, and hurried to where we thought the sound issued from, and, to our astonishment, found an old man suffering for food, and as my friend had a small lunch with him, he gladly offered it. The old man almost grabbed it from him.

We stayed there that night with the old gentleman, and next day our friends and guide came upon us, but, best of all, I imagined the old gentleman was the father of one

of my friends, who had been reported dead for a couple of years, and just then I awoke and laughed to myself at the experience I imagined I had just passed through.

A Tragedy in the Upper World.

(By Ray F. Anson, Lockport, N. Y.)

It was in the city of S——, N. Y., in which there was to be a great event known as the N. C. Fair, which lasted three days, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Friday being woman's day. And it was this day that I was to ascend above the clouds in a balloon with a chum of mine, being an Irish man, who was superstitious, and bad luck to them who told him he would never come back, but land in—the Halfway House. So he came to me and said, "I will not go in the balloon with you, for Mike says I will never come back," and for me to get some one else. This happened at one-thirty P. M., and we were to ascend at 2 P. M. sharp. So I asked a good many of my friends to go up with me, but they all had their girls and couldn't leave them, bad luck to them.

So I called for volunteers, and out of thousands only one man responded, so I had to take him, though I did not like his looks. So we put on our suits, for it was time to ascend, and it was getting cooler and looked like rain. As we got into the basket they cut the ropes, and as we shot in the air there was a great shout beneath us, but it soon died away. And as we ascended, the man who had volunteered to go with me, kept throwing out the sand-bags till we were so far above the clouds that I had to don my fur coat and also replace my cap with a fur one, but still he had nerve enough to keep throwing them out. I was so scared that I could hardly speak. I think it was on account of the cold, but finally I plucked up nerve enough to ask him how much further we were going, at which he only laughed, scowled, and then said to h——. And then I saw he was frothing at the mouth,

and I knew the man who was above the clouds with me was mad, and at any moment he might take it into his head to kill me. So I exerted all my strength I had and jumped upon him, thinking I would bind him hand and foot and then descend. But I had run up against a stone wall, for the man picked me up and lifted me over the side of the basket, and rocked me to and fro, where he kindly informed me that when he counted three he would drop me to the earth below. And then he counted once, twice, twice and a half, thrice, and I dropped down, down, down, and struck my head against the bed-post, on which I awoke, only to find myself in bed, rubbing my sore head. I think Mike was about right, and bad luck to the mad man above the clouds.

A Curious Dream I Had.

(By Fred Schlegel, Chicago, Ill.)

One night all our family were sitting in the reading-room, talking about curious dreams they had, when all of a sudden I thought of a dream which I am going to tell you about: One night I was dreaming I was awakened by a knock on the window. I looked out and saw a man with a pillow cover over his head and a glass-cutter in his right hand; in his left hand he had a pistol. He pointed it at me and I fainted. When I recovered my senses, I found myself in a dark and damp place. I thought it was a basement, but when I got my senses better, I found out I was in an old sewer.

I did not know how long I was there, but, all of a sudden, I saw a gleam of light. It came from above. When I looked up, I saw a face, and a man came down. He asked me if I would have something to eat. I said I would. I ate what he brought, and he unbound my hands. I saw a slugshot in his pocket, which I kept my eye on until I saw a chance, and I grabbed it. I hit him with it, and he dropped senseless to the bottom of the sewer. I took off his clothes and put them on me. I climbed the ladder and got out. I walked away, when I was pulled by the shoulder. I looked around and I saw an officer, who said: "You are under arrest," and I was taken to the police-station and charged with murder. I said I was innocent of the charge, but the sergeant said: "Take him to the dungeon and have him watched well." I was put in a dark room, and a cup of water and a loaf of bread were placed on a stool.

In the morning I was awakened by the click of a lock. I was taken to the court room and I was dismissed. I awoke and I knew I had been dreaming all the time.

A Realistic Dream.

(By Frank Connell, Kansas City, Mo.)

One Thursday night in the year of 1900 I went to bed as usual, and slowly dozed into sleep. Weird thoughts came before my mind and I began to dream of robberies and murders, and of Indians. At last I began to think that our house was being robbed. I slept on, and I thought that I heard the striking of matches and the breaking of a piece of glass or crockery. I dreamed that I got up and went into the bathroom and turned on the

bathtub faucet as hard as I could, and, after letting it run a few minutes, turned it off. I then heard walking downstairs and I went back to bed and went to sleep. I slept on, dreaming that our valuables were stolen and that I would find many things missing in the morning, such as painted china. I dreamed on, sometimes thinking I heard footsteps and sometimes that I was being attacked. At last I dreamed I was freezing, and was awakened by some one calling my name. I dressed quickly, for it was bitter cold and I wanted to get downstairs and sit by the kitchen stove. When I did get down, it was to learn some news. Our colored servant, who had come to get breakfast, found the front door open and, thinking that we had been warm during the night and had opened the door, she went on with breakfast without shutting the door. When mother came down she asked her if we had been hot during the night. Mother told her that we were nearly frozen and, when the girl told her that she had found the door open, that accounted for us being cold. But our spirits were revived when we had shut the door and found that nothing had been taken. So you see that part of my dream was realistic, for we also found burned matches on the floor.

A Railroad Dream.

((By G. M. Miller, Washington, D. C.)

At the time of this dream, I lived in a small town in Colorado, and had been riding on cattle cars all day, having a good time.

I went to bed early that night, and dropped off to sleep immediately, and soon found myself nearing a railroad crossing. An express train was flying along toward me, being about four hundred yards distant at the time and being in a hurry about something, I ran to cross before it reached me.

In my hurry I stumbled and fell in the middle of the track, and, trying to get up, it seemed as if my knees stuck to the ties. Grasping a rail, I tried to pull myself off, but my knees still stuck to the ties. The express was getting nearer every second, and I gave myself up for lost.

When the cowcatcher was about six feet off, I woke up to find my hands grasping the edge of the bed (an imaginary rail). The strain from pulling being relaxed, I shot over the edge of the bed, landing about three feet away on my ear and bruising my shins on the edge of the bed.

A Visit to a Planet.

(By W. H. M., Hoosick Falls, N. Y.)

The following is an account of a dream I once had: I became acquainted with an old man, who asked me if I would like to visit one of the planets, saying that he believed one of them, Mars, to be inhabited.

I answered in the affirmative, whereupon he started off, saying:

"Come on, then, I have a contrivance, which I constructed myself, by means of which I can overcome the attraction that the earth has for it and whatever is connected to it, provided it is not too great; and when we

are in the carrying car of this contrivance, which will be started toward the planet Mars, we shall move right on until we come to the planet, where we can stop."

We came upon this invention of his a short distance from where we had been talking. Stepping into the car, which was of strong basket-work, he inquired if I was ready. I told him that I was, and he blew a whistle.

Immediately after he had given this signal, we were started off by an unseen power and we flew through space at a frightful velocity.

After traveling for quite a length of time, we came to Mars, and there it was, inhabited, as he had thought. The inhabitants, however, did not differ much from the people on our own world; although we could not understand their language or read their books, for they had a system of writing. In general, though, they were very much the same as our earthly inhabitants. They treated us royally and conveyed us in carriages, drawn by curious-looking animals as far and in whatever direction we wished to go. My friend had a camera, and he took a number of pictures. Among these pictures was one of the carriage in which we had been riding. We began to think that it was about time to start back, so we collected a lot of curiosities, and, packing them away in our conveyance, started. It did not take us very long to reach home, and I awoke, saying:

"Wait a minute and you will see the books and some of the pictures."

My Adventure With a Mountain Lion.

(By J. L. Rosebaum, Crown Point, Ind.)

My little dog Jip and I were out one day in the wilderness of the Catskill Mountains, when all at once we heard a loud cracking of twigs and bushes. Jip was shivering, and I was not far from it, even if I did have a .30 magazine rifle. But I gave a jump when I saw that huge thing come out from behind some large rocks. I raised my gun to my shoulder and aimed, at least I thought I did, and fired. This missed, and the beast thundered down at us. The dog ran and hid, but I just said, "Either I or the beast must drop," and I pulled once more; and this time hit it in the shoulder, enraging it more than ever. It jumped at me with force enough to have killed an ox had it struck. I just stepped aside and let it pass. Then I took good aim and fired once more, and killed it. I was just ready to skin it and sell the skin when I woke up. Say, but I was mad when I found out that it was only a dream.

My Adventure With a Robber.

(By Charles W. Martin, Martin's Ferry, Ohio.)

I had been absent from home about five years. During that time my mother had moved from the country to the city of W—. I had never been in this city before, and, of course, was anxious to walk around and see the sights. I was strolling along the streets one bright afternoon, when I discovered I was in the slums of the city. I was walking along looking at the dirty buildings and the dirty mass of human beings moving to and fro like huge rats. Suddenly I was confronted by an old lady.

She said she was lost, and asked me if I would show her to No. — Tenth street. I told her I was a stranger in the city, but I would help her try to find the place. We started, and had walked about two blocks when she said she would like to stop in a store a few moments. We walked a little farther, and came to a dirty-looking store. She said she wanted to make a purchase, and asked me to go in with her. She walked into the store and I followed, but I had no sooner got inside the door than she turned around and seized me by both wrists and pulled my arms behind me. Just then a man jumped up from behind the counter and started to go through my pockets. He took my pistol and then took out my watch and started to unfasten my chain. I decided it was time for me to do something, so I yelled, "Fire!" with all my might. The yell startled the old woman so that she let go of my wrists. I then gave a sudden jump backward, which knocked the old woman flat on her back. I then gave the man a blow straight from the shoulder, which sent him spinning against the wall. I then made a bound for the door, which was not locked. I got out on the street and ran about a half a square. I looked back, but could see nobody following me, so I walked on home. Mother was upstairs when I got home, so I sat down to rest and thought I would tell her my story when she came down. I had been sitting there about a half an hour when I heard a knock at the door. I went to the door. A man was there with some books. He said he was a book-agent, and would like to show me his books. He was the same man that had robbed me of my pistol and watch in the little store. He was in disguise and thought I would not recognize him. I told him to come in and I would go upstairs and get mother. I ran upstairs and told mother to telephone for the police, that there was a robber downstairs. I came back downstairs and the man was taking the silverware out of a drawer in the side-board. I started toward him, he turned quickly and leveled his revolver at me and told me to move another step and I would die in my tracks. Just then mother came downstairs with a poker in her hand. When she got almost to him, he turned his pistol on her. When he did that I made a bound for him and gave him a blow which sent him to the floor. Before he could rise, mother hit him with the poker and that settled him. I got some rope and bound his hands and feet together. Just then two policemen came in the door. They threw some water in his face and brought him to his senses, and then started to the station with him. And then I awoke.

A Narrow Escape.

(By Roy Leibengood, Mt. Vernon, Ill.)

Some time ago I dreamed that I was captain of a company of boys and we were being attacked by a larger force of cavalry. We were behind an earthwork which the cavalry charged repeatedly, but, finally, they shot a chum of mine and then I started to him, when a bullet hit me in the shoulder and I fell on the floor and woke up.



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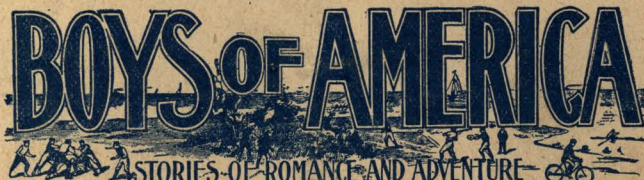
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